

GUIDANCE

BY

**SHEIKH AL-AMIN BIN ALI
AL-MAZRUI
(1891 – 1947)**

Translated
By
Muhammad bin Yusuf

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mabiasha@gmail.com

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Translator's Note¹

Verily, all praises are due to Allah (*Subhanahu-wa-Ta'ala*)². We praise Him, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. I bear witness there is none worthy of worship except Allah. And I bear witness that Muhammad (*Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*)³ is His servant and Messenger. O you who believe! Fear Allah the way he should be feared, and die not except as Muslims.

As to what follows, verily, the truest speech is the book of Allah. The best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (*Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*). The worst affairs are the innovated ones. Every innovated matter is a heresy. And every heresy is misguidance. And every misguidance is in the Hell-fire.

I read some of Sheikh Al-Amin's books in 1993; however, at the time his writings did not cause any great impact on me, i.e., not any more than any other work by other scholars. But when I read his books again five years later, it was a totally different scenario. His words had a profound effect on me, so much so, that I thought if I do not share his message with the rest of the Muslim *Ummah*, I will be doing an injustice by denying them a message that may improve their lives in some form.

So far I have read six of his books, all written in the Kiswahili language. They are just part of the many

¹ Words that are in between [] are the words of the translator, together with the footnotes.

² *Subhanahu-wa-Ta'ala* [The Glorious and Exalted].

³ *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* [Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him].

small books on various subjects that he wrote in the course of his life time. Although most of his writing was in Kiswahili, he did, however, write five books in the Arabic language, including his famous one, *Hidayatul-Atfal*. Two have been translated into English, *The History of the Mazrui Dynasty of Mombasa* (non-religious book), and *Selected Traditions of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam)* - this has also been translated by another author, Hamza Yusuf, and given the name *The Content of Character*. And more importantly, a biography of this great giant has finally got a champion who is even more passionate than me about Sheikh Al-Amin; this important biography⁴ of Sheikh Al-Amin has been written by Ghalib Yusuf Baalawy. The other two books that Sheikh Al-Amin wrote in Arabic were never published.

After making a decision to share the information with the Muslim *Ummah*, I began typing his work and posting it on the Internet. But because this work was in Kiswahili, I thought that it can only reach and benefit an insignificant amount of audience. That is when I thought I should translate the work into the English language, which has become the most International language of communication.

After seeking the advice of a few people, including my wife, I decided to start with the translation of the book known as **Uwongozi**, which basically means **Guidance**. It is a collection of pamphlets that he used to write and distribute to Muslims on a weekly basis from 1930-1932. What attracted me the most about this work was the nature of issues facing the Muslims

⁴ In Kiswahili – “*Maisha ya Sheikh Al-Amin bin Ali Mazrui*.”

almost 70 years ago. The more I read, the more I thought that the problems facing the Muslim *Ummah* have not changed that much. The issues are basically the same. The articles written by Sheikh Al-Amin were of a contemporary nature then, and remain the same today. I started translating this work in May, 1998.

Sheikh Al-amin was, in my opinion, a Thinker, a Scholar, and a true Intellectual giant of the 1930s and the 1940s who has left East Africans and the Global Community a very lasting intellectual legacy. I know most people, including scholars like Prof. Ahmed Idha Salim, look at him as a "Reformer", but I would also like to look at him as a Revivalist. Meaning, on the one hand he *reformed* the East African Community (and the Swahili Culture in particular), and freed it from un-Islamic cultural practices. On the other hand, he *revived* the true *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) which had either been unknown, forgotten, or neglected. And Allah knows best.

Finally I would like to thank Allah for the opportunity and ability to translate this work. I would like to thank all my brothers, but especially Agil (who made an effort to send me books written by Sheikh Al-Amin), and Ghaliib (whom we encouraged each other to complete our respective works on Sheikh Al-Amin). Also, I would like to give special thanks to my beloved wife and confidant, Khyrul,⁵ who throughout

⁵ She is a Registered Nurse who has worked in various capacities, including being a Supervisor in the Intensive Care Unit at a Hospital in the UK (which is where she studied and lived for 10 years). And in Canada, she has worked in various

translating this work, was patient with me, understood the importance of this work, encouraged me, reviewed and corrected it. May Allah bless all of them. I pray that Allah accepts this work from me, and forgive me for any mistakes and errors that I may have made in the translation. Last but not least, I pray that this work will be beneficial to those who read it.

I would like to take a special moment to pray to Allah to reward Sheikh Al-Amin bin Ali for his contributions in writing and teaching in the first half of this century. May Allah provide him with a shade on the Day of Judgement, a day when there will be no other shade except the one offered by the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth.

I dedicate this book to my two parents, Yusuf al-Baalawy (my beloved father) and Aisha al-Mazrui (my beloved mother and best friend). They brought up eight⁶ wonderful children with love and compassion; they taught us the purpose of life in the best way they knew how.

“My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small.”⁷ Ameen!

Muhammad bin Yusuf

7th Sha’baan, 1427

(31st August, 2006)

E-mail Address: mabiasha@gmail.com

hospitals across three provinces, at one Medical Institution she worked as an Assistant Director.

⁶ Farouk, Ghalib, Agil, Abdullatif, Soud, Abduswamad, Ali, and I.

⁷ Qur'an 17:24

A Brief Biography of **Sheikh Al-Amin bin Ali** **Al-Mazrui⁸**

Al Ustadh Al Imam Sheikh Al-Amin was born in Mombasa [Kenya] on 15th Jumada' Thani, 1308 A.H. [Monday, 26th January, 1891]. Sheikh Al-Amin did not study from his father, but instead he studied from his father's student, Sheikh Suleiman bin Ali Khamis Al-Mazrui. He studied all disciplines from Sheikh Suleiman, who was also his foster parent. Sheikh Suleiman offered his daughter [Swafiya] to Sheikh Al-Amin in marriage.

In his enthusiasm to seek knowledge, Sheikh Al-Amin travelled to *Unguja* [Zanzibar, East Africa] where he studied, and compiled various disciplines from renowned scholars of this island, Sayyid Ahmed bin Sumeyt and Sheikh Abdullah Bakathir.

Sheikh Al-Amin's hard work in studying was so tremendous that not only did he excel from among his peers, but some of his teachers too. Also, he took great interest in studying books which were not available in East Africa at the time; these included books by scholars like, Ibn Taymiya, Ibnul-Qayyim al Jawzi, Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad Abdul-Wahhab, etc. Based on what he achieved from these great scholars, he was in a position to give opinions, which at times were in conflict with the opinions of his teachers.

⁸ This brief biography was originally written in Kiswahili by Sheikh Hammad Muhammad Kassim, who is currently The Chief Kadhi (Qadhi) of Kenya.

Among the legacy he left behind was to introduce a [weekly] pamphlet⁹ called *Al-Islah* (which contained religion and politics), in both the Arabic language and Kiswahili. But at last he was unable to continue with the publication upon being appointed to the position of *Qadhi* [(Islamic) Judge] of the city of Mombasa, and later the Chief *Qadhi* of Kenya.

Sheikh Al-Amin died in 1947¹⁰ while he was still the Chief *Qadhi* of Kenya. May Allah rest him in peace, with among those that Allah blessed - prophets, companions of the prophets, martyrs, and God-conscious people.

Among his students are:

1. A former Chief *Qadhi* of Kenya, Sheikh Muhammad Kassim Mazrui
2. Sheikh Rashid Kassim Mazrui
3. Sheikh Ahmed Muhammad Bereky
4. Sayyid Ali Badawy
5. A former Chief *Qadhi* of Kenya, Sheikh Abdalla Saleh Farsy
6. Maalim Said bin Ahmed

⁹ The pamphlet dealt with contemporary issues affecting the Muslim Community of the day.

¹⁰ Sheikh Al-Amin left behind six children, Harith, Salma, Nafisa, Aisha, Ali, and Alya. Alya and Prof. Ali A. Mazrui are alive. *Alhamdulillah*. However, Harith, Salma, Nafisa, and Aisha have passed away. Aisha who is the mother of the translator of this book died in 1988. May Allah rest her and the rest in *Jannah-tul-Firdaus*. *Ameen*.

A Biographical Sketch of the Author¹¹

The author, Sheikh Al-Amin b.¹² Ali b. Abdullaah b. Nafi' b. Mazru' b. Abdullaah b. Khamis b. Ali b. Abdullaah b. Ali Al-Mazru'i, was a Teacher, Imam and Scholar.

This Abdullaah b. Khamis is the seventh lineal ancestor of the fourteen lineages of the Mazari'a who emigrated to the Swahili Coast.¹³ His grandfather, the Scholar Sheikh Abdullaah b. Nafi' was the first of the Mazari'a to adopt the Shafi'i School [*Madh-hab*, School of Thought].

Sheikh Al-Amin, God rest his soul [*Rahmahu'Allah*], was born in the Town of Mombasa [East Africa] on 15th Jumada' Thani A.H. 1308, or 26th January A.D. 1891, and his father died when he was four years old. So he was brought up in the care of his relative the learned Sheikh Sulayman b. Ali b. Khamis Al-Mazru'i, the former Chief *Qadhi* of Kenya. From him he received most of his proficiency in the Religious Sciences.

He used frequently to visit Zanzibar [East Africa] to study under the scholars Sayyid Ahmad b. Abi Bakr b. Sumeyt, and Sheikh Abdullaah b. Muhammad BaKathir. He made a wide and deep study of the Sciences and excelled his fellows, and the *Ulama* (Islamic Scholar) began to go to him from Zanzibar, Tanga, Lamu, and

¹¹ Written by the late Sheikh Muhammad Kassim, and translated by J. McL. Ritchie.

¹² A short form of the Arabic word, *bin* or *ibn*, which means son of.

¹³ East African Coast.

other regions of East Africa to gather a little from the abundance of his knowledge.

Among his pupils were the excellent and learned Ma'mun b. Sulayman b. Ali Al-Mazru'i, former *Qadhi* of Mombasa, and the excellent and learned Sheikh Abdullah b. Salih Al-Farsi, former *Qadhi* of Zanzibar [later, former Chief *Qadhi* of Kenya], and the excellent and learned Teacher Sheikh Muhammad b. Ahmad Al-Burayki [Bereky], the Teacher Hajj Sheikh Ahmad b. Ahmad Sa'id Al-Qumri, and the Teacher Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah Ghazali, and the Teacher Sheikh Rashid b. Qasim Al-Mazru'i, and the humble writer of this account [i.e., Sheikh Muhammad b. Kassim Al-Mazru'i]. The late learned Sheikh Ali b. Humayd Al-Buhri, former *Qadhi* of Tanga, used to boast that he was one of the late Sheikh's [Al-Amin] pupils.

He loved the Muslims in general and his own people in particular. He started libraries and Schools of Religion for them, and spent the best part of his time in instruction and teaching and writing books on Religion, which had a great influence in spreading Islam in the country. He was the first to write books on religion in the Swahili language. Even if there were no book to his credit but that entitle *The Children's Guide*, which is read in all the mosques and schools of East Africa and beyond, it would suffice as a mark of his influence in this world, and as a treasure laid up for the next.

When he understood the great benefit of Newspapers he desired them for his own folk, and issued on 4th Jumada' Thani A.H. 1349, [26th October,

1930] a paper¹⁴ in the Swahili language which dealt with political, social and religious questions, especially the spreading of the *Sunnah*,¹⁵ and rejection of heresies.

His people showed violent hostility to him, but he was patient under their injuries relying upon God, the most faithful in His saying, may He be exalted, "Answer their injuries with patience and rely upon God. God certainly loves those who rely on Him." Much of the truth has spread to the praise of God, and much of what is useless has perished. He used to write the books with his own hand, and duplicate them and distribute them free.

Then on 22nd Shawwal A.H. 1350 (29th February A.D. 1932) he published a weekly newspaper in Arabic and Swahili which he called *Al-Islah* (Reform), issued with the Qur'anic verse: "I only desire reform so far as I am able, to the best of my power. And my guidance cannot come except from Allah, in Him I trust and unto Him I repent."¹⁶ Its fame spread throughout East Africa.

He then became *Qadhi* of Mombasa in Ramadhan A.H. 1351 (December A.D. 1932). He performed this office with distinction, and was a model of justice and equity. Then in Rabi'Awwal A.H. 1356 (June A.D. 1937) he became Chief *Qadhi* [of Kenya], and performed this office with aptitude and worthiness, and was a good example for his successors. His duties and *Qadhi* and *Mufti* did not prevent him writing,

¹⁴ He called it *Sahifa*.

¹⁵ Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam).

¹⁶ Qur'an 11:88.

teaching and travelling to many East African regions to preach Islam and give leadership.

He died in the afternoon of Tuesday 8th Jumada' Awwal A.H. 1366 (April 1947), leaving great grief and deep sorrow in the hearts of Muslims. May God sheathe him in His Mercy and Good Pleasure, and cause him to dwell in the spaciousness of His Paradise with the Prophets, the faithful, the Martyrs and the righteous to whom He has been gracious, and may he be a worthy companion to them.

The late Sheikh Al-Amin left as male offspring Sheikh Harith b. Al-Amin Al-Mazru'i, who was *Liwali*¹⁷ of Lamu, and Dr. Ali b. Al-Amin Al-Mazru'i, Professor of Political Science in Makerere University.

Sheikh Muhammad b. Qasim Al-Mazru'i
Mombasa, Kenya (1965)

¹⁷ Highest Government appointed position in the district.

GUIDANCE

Contains:

*Advise and Discussion of issues
which
could improve the lives of Muslims
and guide them on the right path,
in both this life, and the life in the
hereafter*

**In The Name of Allah, The Most
Beneficent, The Most Merciful**

INTRODUCTION

Among the modern things which enlightens people, open up their minds, and empower them, in order to instil a sense of development in their lives, a newspaper is among the best modem of communication. And that is why you will not see any nation or organization in any major city in the world, which does not have a paper of its own. A paper which will bring to the attention of its people, issues that will benefit them, issues which they will hold on to. And it is for this very reason that influenced me into launching a publication 14 years ago.

On the 4th of Jumada' Thani, 1349 A.H. [26th October, 1930] I begun to publish a two page pamphlet in the Kiswahili language entitled, SAHIFA. I would publish 100 copies every Monday of the week, and distribute it free of charge. I had a two-fold intention, to benefit the readers with its contents, and to make them get used to reading such publications. This pamphlet lasted 16 months; thereafter I launched a different publication, AL-ISLAH, in both the Arabic language and Kiswahili. This one lasted for 12 months, and I had to discontinue shortly after that upon being offered a government position [as a Jurist].

Although in the *Sahifa* there were a number of issues which interest some of the readers, but unfortunately this publication did not reach many areas which its counterpart, *Al-Islah*, reached. This was mainly due to the fact that I was only able to publish a few copies of the *Sahifa*.

At the moment my two children¹⁸, Muhammad Kassim and Rashid Kassim, have requested me to select some articles from *Sahifa* which will benefit the masses, so that they may put them into a book form. I have complied to this request of theirs. Thus the following are the various articles with the date in which they were first published.

May Allah bless these words, benefit those who will read them, and may they be a reason for their success and good character, and avoiding evil. **Ameen!**

Al-Amin bin Ali

14th June, 1944

[22nd Jumada' Thani, 1363]

¹⁸ These two are actually his nephews, but in the Swahili Culture there is no word as nephew or niece. The children of your brother or sister are considered your own.

OUR OBLIGATION TOWARDS
WOMEN
No. 2, Jumada' Thani, 1349 A.H.
[October, 1930]

Allah has created us into males and females, and based on His own ultimate wisdom and justice, He has created women with a weaker body [less strength], and more emotional. On the other hand, He has created man to be much stronger and less emotional (and calmer). Thus He has made it incumbent upon men to take care of women, as He mentions it in the Qur'an,

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women.” [Qur'an 4:34]

And Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said,

“A man is a shepherd over his family, and he will be asked about his flock on the Day of Judgement.”

We have been commanded to take care of our women, to help them enjoin what is good, assist them in forbidding what is evil, and protect them from any harm that may reach them.

We have an obligation to assist our women in following what is stipulated in the *Shariah*¹⁹, and helping them in avoiding what is unacceptable in the religion, and what may be a barrier to being modest.

¹⁹ Islamic Law.

As we had indicated earlier, women tend to be more emotional, thus if we are going to leave them to do what they desire, and we encourage their actions, they will end up displeasing Allah more and more²⁰. Eventually it will be difficult, if not impossible, to get them to abandon any bad behaviour that they may have gotten used to.

For example, we have allowed them to wear Western style clothing, and they thought that their action was acceptable. Now they have adopted the Western hair style. When they realized that there was no comment on this issue either, they have started putting on caps on our children. Much worse than this, unfortunately, some of the women have started going to the Missionary schools to learn the English language. We are still watching [without saying anything]! If this trend continues, it will not be surprising to see them take off their *hijab*, and eventually those who are currently going to the missionary schools will start going to the Church! May be then it will dawn upon us that we should have seen it coming and done something to prevent it, but, unfortunately, by then it will be too late!

Women can only take part of the blame, the men have to take their part of the blame for allowing things to happen and deteriorate before their very eyes. The men should have known better of what is and what is not pleasing to Allah, and more importantly, to have

²⁰ I have to point out here that this is not just to women. Indeed, the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said that, "*a believer is like a mirror to another believer.*" So even among men, we need to encourage each other to do good, and avoid evil. And women too have an obligation to encourage men to do what is pleasing to Allah.

known that imitating the disbelievers is an act forbidden by Allah. Having known all this, yet they allowed it to happen?

Some may argue that this is being *civilized*. This is totally untrue. Had civilization been to imitate the West to this degree, other non-Muslim Africans [or others] would have been civilized too. But civilization is based on knowledge, professionalism, and good character, and more importantly, being cultured and becoming a righteous person.

Although the Indians have also been influenced and exposed to Westernization, look at their women. Do their women wear Western outfits, or cut their hair like the Western women?²¹ If they are not imitating the Westerners in this regard, then know that it has nothing to do with civilization, rather inferiority complex. The men have to take most of the blame. The only solution is to counsel our women and educate them well on Islam. Even if they do not abandon what they have so far acquired [from westernization], we have an obligation to at least try and prevent them from getting worse.

The best thing for our daughters is to build our own *Madrasas*²², so that we may teach them what is beneficial to them, teach them their religion, how to take care of their homes and raise their children. Also, teach them jobs that will not force them to compromise their Islam, nor tempt them to do just about anything in order to make ends meet.

²¹ Quite the contrary. Indian women, especially Hindus, have their own traditional outfit, *sareeh*, and leave their hair to grow long.

²² Islamic schools.

After having done this, we would have fulfilled our obligation towards our daughters, and built a foundation for future generations.

EDUCATING OUR YOUNG WOMEN
No. 3, 7th Jumada' Thani, 1349 A.H.
[29th October, 1930]

[Unfortunately] most of us have abandoned our younger generation in terms of teaching them about the [Islamic] religion. And those amongst us who are eager to educate their children, have nevertheless only been concerned in educating the males, and are not concerned with the females, as if the females deserve to be in a state of ignorance! This is definitely a grave mistake, because knowledge is not only for the males, but the females too. The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said,

"Seeking knowledge is mandatory on every Muslim."

In any case if one were to analyze carefully you will realize that to educate one female (child) is better than ten males, because the female is the one who will [ultimately] bring up the children in a home. In a sense, it is this kind of home which becomes the first *Madrasa* [Islamic school] for educating children, and teaching them good character and respect. And if the mother is ignorant and one with bad behaviour, the children tend to follow suite. There is a saying which says, "the one being *brought up* turns out exactly as the one who *brings up*."

The difference between a woman who is educated and one who is not is very clear in the area of bringing up children. For example, a woman who has learned the Qur'an, is always more concerned to send her

children to the *Madrasa*. On the other hand, one who is ignorant [of the Qur'an] needs only a minor excuse not to send her children to the *Madrasa*, and sometimes even create an excuse in order that she may avoid sending the children [to the *Madrasa*].

At the same time, a man's piece of mind is [almost] directly linked to having a good wife. The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said,

"The best pleasure in this life is to have a righteous wife."

Therefore how will a man enjoy this pleasure if his wife is ignorant, and does not understand the obligations between a man and a woman, her rights from her husband, and the husband's rights from her? Or how will the man be happy in a home whereby the *custodian* [wife] does not know how to run her home, and has no knowledge of health education?²³ Or a home whereby the husband struggles to save something while the wife has no sense of the importance of spending with moderation. Also, sometimes it is due to the woman not having enough knowledge of domestic work that she would expect her husband to sew their cloths, and things like pillows. These are things that the wife should know

²³ It is possible here that the author meant that it is also important for the woman to be able to take care of the physical needs of their children, for example, sickness. The ability to read prescriptions and administer medication as per the doctor's instructions. Also, the ability to be able to know what to do if, for example, the body temperature of a child goes up.

and be able to implement them in her household.²⁴ Thus it is the obligation of the parents to educate their children, in order that they may grow up knowing what their obligations are. This is how we should bring up our girls. The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said,

"One who has been given girls and brought them up accordingly [i.e., according to Shariah], they [girls] will be their protection from the Hell fire."

If in the past it was important to educate our girls and build for them *Madrasa* to teach them [Islamic] religion and responsibilities, then it is even more important today to do so. It is only after having done this that we may claim we have fulfilled our obligation [as parents]. At the same time we would have saved them from being educated in missionary schools; some

²⁴ The author here is talking of a Muslim home where the husband goes out to look for sustenance for his family, while the wife remains at home to take care of the rest of the family. Allah says, "*Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means.*" [Qur'an 4:31]. On the other hand it should not be misunderstood that sewing clothes is something that is demeaning to women or men. My own father was a Tailor. It is also known that the Prophet Muhammad used to sew his own clothes and help in other domestic chores. On the other hand, within our generation some of our women go out to work (at times out of necessity and other times because they have something better to offer within the society). And with that, it becomes incumbent upon husbands and wives to share in the responsibilities of taking care of the home. Thus we should raise our boys with this understanding.

argue that they are doing so in order to have their children educated! In reality they do not understand that they are building a foundation for *Jahannam* [hell fire] for their children, because the very reason why they have these kind of schools is to convert Muslims into Christianity.

O my dear brethren! You must understand that missionary schools are the doors to enter into disbelief; therefore you must be concerned of your children. Take them out of those [missionary] schools, to avoid being forsaken by Allah in the Hereafter. And anyone who sees another [Muslim] sending their children to such schools and do nothing in the way of advising him [not to do so], he will be in error. And one who hears about it and not hate it, he is also in error.

Let us take good care of our children, let us take them out of missionary schools before their minds get corrupted. We should urgently have an alternative of *Madrasas*, in order that we may preserve their faith, and teach them what is beneficial to them in the *Duniya* [earth] and *Akhera* [hereafter].

**THE BLESSING OF UNITY AND ILL
OF FACTIONS**
No. 6, 10th Rajab, 1349 A. H.
[1st December, 1930]

The benefit of uniting and getting along, and the harm of having factions and petty differences, are indeed very clear. Who doubts the fact that when a group of individuals put all their resources together they may be able to purchase goods that one of them may be unable to purchase? Or who doubts the fact that one individual may be unable to perform a task that may easily be accomplished by three or four individuals? These are just examples in worldly matters. In religious matters, we all know that a congregational prayer is 27 [twenty seven] times better than a prayer performed by one individual on his own. These examples should be enough to make it apparent to us that unity is of paramount importance to us, and not partisan. And Allah has commanded us to unite, to maintain brotherhood, to love one another, protect each other, and help each other in good deeds. Allah has also commanded us not to disassociate from each other, anger one another or harm each other, and to avoid encouraging each other in evil deeds. We have also been warned that if we disobey Allah, we are not going to be successful, and furthermore we are going to be weak and loose our *sharaf* [dignity].

Let us go back in history and look at the Muslims who obeyed the commandments of Allah. For

example, *Al-Aus* and *Al-Khzraj*²⁵ wiped out their differences, and Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) established a brotherhood between the *Muhajireen* and *Ansar*²⁶. Each one thought of the other first before their own very soul. These were truly the Muslims of yesteryears! In those times Muslims liberated lands, one quarter of the world, although they were small in number. Their empire extended from Arabia, Sham²⁷, Egypt, Iran, India, and up to China. They ruled European cities²⁸ for more than 800 years, reaching even into French cities, almost conquering Paris. European Kings respected these Muslim rulers, bowing down to people like Abdul-Rahman Nassor and Harun Rashid²⁹ in order to seek protection from the Muslim Empire. Even the King of England, Richard I, offered her daughter to the brother of a Muslim ruler, Salah-ad-Din³⁰, with the

²⁵ Two very famous tribes among the *Ansar* (people of Madinah) whose animosity date back to pre-Prophet Muhammad's (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) period.

²⁶ *Muhajireen* were those Muslims who migrated from Makkah to Madinah. *Ansar* were those Muslims of Madinah who opened their arms to receive the immigrants from Makkah. In a sense this was the first true unity of Muslim brotherhood.

²⁷ Sham is basically the present day Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria.

²⁸ Muslims ruled the present day Spain for over 8 centuries.

²⁹ Harun al-Rashid (766-809 A.D.), fifth Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad, from 786. His rule extended from North Africa to India; he exacted tribute from the Byzantine Empire.

³⁰ Salah-ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub (1138-1193 A.D.) - He crushed the crusaders in Palestine. He reclaimed Syria and most of Palestine including Jerusalem (1187) from the crusaders, and forced a stalemate on England's Richard I

intention of establishing close ties and friendship. This is the blessing of unity, getting along, and helping each other. On the other hand let us look at those who disobeyed the commandments of Allah, and started to have factions and hatred [between themselves], how did they end up? They were driven out of the cities they had previously liberated, and furthermore, driven back into their own cities and ruled by their very enemy. They became so weak after having been so strong. This is the result of partisan!

Close to home, let us look at the example of Egypt. Westerners have gone into that country for 50 years [half a century] now³¹, after taking advantage of the animosity between the Muslims and the Copts. Once these two groups realized that their differences would result in the continuing presence of the Westerners and potentially loose their country, they wiped out their differences and united. And so although they were only 14 million in number, they were able to be triumphant. On the other hand let us look at the example of India. Europeans have been present in India for 300 years, although their population is 360 million people. Due to the differences and animosity between Muslims and Hindus, Muslims and Muslims, and Hindus and Hindus, they are still under subjugation³², i.e., they have not achieved the peace of mind that they yearn for.

(1192) during the 3rd Crusade, leaving the Muslims masters of Palestine. He was famed for chivalry.

³¹ In 1954 Gamal Abdel Nasser (then Prime Minister) ended the British military presence in Egypt. Nasser became President in 1956-1970.

³² Ultimately India became an independent nation in 1948, following the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947.

When we make a true commitment to exalt Islam, we will be able to achieve dignity and respect from others. And to start with we must first iron out our differences, unite ourselves under one banner³³, help each other establish what is good, and love one other as Allah has commanded.

³³ The banner of *Laailaha Illah Llah, Muhammad Rasulluh Llah* (there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).

IMITATING THE WEST
No. 8, 24th Rajab, 1349 A.H.
[15th December, 1930]

[Normally] every people have [some aspects] of their culture and tradition which are unique from other people. Mostly this is due to differences in nationality, ethnicity, and locality. And one of the distinguishing factors of one's nationality is their culture and tradition. Therefore a smart person always sticks to his or her culture, being cautious of abandoning their culture and imitating other people's culture. Otherwise, he may end up neither with the culture he [abandoned], nor with the one that he tried to [imitate].

We should take all necessary measures to avoid trading our culture with the culture of those who are different from us, unless it is absolutely necessary. And even then it should only be on [those aspects of culture] which are good, i.e., not in conflict with Islam.

I have been forced to discuss this issue upon realizing that we continue to imitate the Westerners. And the [unfortunate] part is that we only imitate them in things that are of no benefit or value, or in things that are harmful (not just to us, but to themselves too)!

We have imitated them in the consumption of alcohol, and wearing of Western style cap; but we do not imitate them in their etiquette in speaking and organizing themselves, and in the enhancement of the social status of their compatriots. In these areas we have refused to imitate them!

We have made a big effort to imitate [the West]; what we ended up with was only football, golf, playing musical instruments, and dancing. Yet we were not interested in picking up their professional and technical achievements³⁴. Even the non-Muslims in our countries have picked up the positive aspects of Western civilization [except us, Muslims]. The [non-Muslim Easterners] have gone into electrical and electronics professions, and modern methods of construction.

For those of us who have learned a few English words, for example, "*Good-morning*" and "*Thank you*," we have stopped greeting each other and thanking each other according to our customs.³⁵ We kid ourselves, thinking that speaking the English language is the most noble of things, such that we loose focus of learning other occupations, business, agriculture, etc.

O people of Mombasa³⁶! We need to make a distinction between knowledge and language. Even in Europe there are so many people who do handy work, domestic workers, and cooks, who speak better

³⁴ It should be noted here that there was a time when non-Muslims, including the Westerners (Europeans), learned so much from the Muslims. These were the days when Muslims had mastered various Sciences, Logic, Mathematics, Philosophy, etc. The tables have now been turned, we seek knowledge from the very people we once educated.

³⁵ This is very unfortunate. We should remember that the Islamic greeting of *Assalamu Alaikum* (Peace be upon you) is not just a greeting, but a supplication in itself, and more importantly, it is part of worship. The one who utters the statement receives a blessing, and the one who responds with *Waalaikum Salam* (And upon you be peace) also receives blessing. This is the sweetness of Faith.

³⁶ Sheikh Al-Amin's hometown.

English than most of us. But are these people considered to be in the category of being educated? No, in fact, these are people who may be at the bottom of their society.

We have even gone to the extent of allowing our women to imitate the Western women. Now the [women] cut their hair short, and wear mini outfits (above the knees). Our women do not imitate those Western women with positive aspects, for example, maintaining cleanliness in their homes, providing good and healthy care for their children, performing handy work, and cooking.

Subhanal-Lah! We do not imitate except negative aspects? We have become like flies, who like to hang around sores; or some insects that do not appreciate good scent, but instead like stinking smell, and uncleanliness.

O Allah! Show us the straight path, and guide us onto it. And, show us the evil path, and keep us away from it. **Ameen.**

ACCOMPLISHMENT AND SUCCESS
IS WHAT BRINGS PRIDE TO A
PEOPLE
No. 11, 15th Sha'ban, 1349 A.H.
[4th January, 1931]

Pride of one's genealogy and the ancestors' success, without imitating their deeds, is one of the major causes for underdevelopment. This is an epidemic in our midst. There are those that feel at peace based on their forefather's piety, although they themselves commit major sins; and there are those that are joyful based on the knowledge that their forefathers had, although they themselves are ignorant. Finally there are those that are proud due to the accomplishment of members of their particular ethnic group, although they themselves are lazy!

Unfortunately among those that live in a world of fantasy are those that consider themselves to be *Shariff*³⁷; some of them do not care about abandoning the daily prayers, or to commit other shameless acts of indecency! They fail to realize that their house servant who is righteous is far much better in the eyes of Allah than them. Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an that,

“Verily! The most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is that who is most righteous.” [49:13].

³⁷ Descendants of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam).

They should be aware that if being a descendant of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) had any significance, then the daughter of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam), Fatima, would have benefited the most. Yet her father [the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam)] told her,

"O Fatima, hold on to good deeds, I would be of no benefit to you before Allah."

A lot of people have deceived themselves, so much so, they are looking down upon some kinds of legitimate jobs. If one does not inherit a house, or a farm (even if it were infertile), or get a white collar job in an office, then he thinks it is better for him to be jobless or even starve, rather than doing handy jobs [blue collar]; for example, a telephone technician, or a construction worker. In their opinion, these are jobs for members of a lower class in a society. They do not understand that the pride of any man is to have a job, and *"if one thinks that his actions would be a hindrance to his prestige, then his social class would not help him either,"* says the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam). A job is not only a part of religion, but it also shapes an individual. You may even see this when you read the biographies of [non-Muslim] people, for example, the American tycoon, Henry Ford ³⁸ [1863-1947], and Mr. MacDonald ³⁹ [1866-1937], the Prime Minister of Britain.

³⁸ American automobile production pioneer. He produced his first automobile in 1896 and established the Ford Motor Company in 1903.

³⁹ James Ramsay MacDonald - British statesman who was the chief founder of Britain's Labour Party (1900), and Prime

In another example, some Arabs⁴⁰, unfortunately, are obsessed with their ancestry, to the extent that they think being Arab is in itself enough. Do you think the Arabs of yesteryears were proud because of nationalistic reasons? *Hasha!* [Of course not]. It was because of their good character and bravery. But the Arabs of today convince themselves that one may be self-satisfied by simply being Arab, without having accomplished anything; some are even illiterate, and they cannot write even their own name. Or how does one proudly associate himself with those who are educated while he does not even know the history of the Arabs of the earlier generations⁴¹? One should be ashamed to associate himself with people who liberated lands, while he does not even dare speak the truth!

In conclusion, if we continue to ground ourselves to such empty pride without following the footsteps of our ancestors with action, we will never be successful, and we will never achieve what our tongues yearn for

Minister of the first and second Labour governments, (Jan.-Oct. 1924 and 1929-1931).

⁴⁰ Although Sheikh Al-Amin is giving an example of the Arabs, this may as well be a message to all other nationalities within the *Ummah*. And that is why the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) made it very clear in one of his statements that, “*An Arab is not better than a non-Arab, and a non-Arab is not better than an Arab. The best is one who is most conscious of Allah.*” Some of the “Arabs” in East Africa, while they are of Arab ancestry, some of them are actually third, fourth or fifth generation African.

⁴¹ These would be the Arabs after the advent of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam), among them the first three generations, which the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) regarded as the best generations of his *Ummah*.

or desire. We should know that pride is what one accomplishes himself or herself, and not saying, "My father was such and such. My parents did this and that." These are statements of people who are not ambitious!

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER⁴² IN
THE RELIGION
No. 12, 22nd Sha'ban, 1349 A.H.
[11th January, 1931]

When one is cautioned by a person whom he trusts, and he asks him to avoid a dangerous path, but decides not to follow the advice, everybody will regard him as being foolish. In this case the one who cautions the other is a regular human being, in which there is a possibility of the person being truthful or not. What if the person who is cautioning us is the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam), who has been saved from telling any lie, and yet do not heed his advice? There is no doubt that [the one who does not take the advice] will be seen as a lunatic without any doubt whatsoever.

The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) has cautioned us on some things, while he has commanded us on others; and [should be] believed by all. In this regard we will be foolish not to follow what he has commanded us to do, and not avoid what he has prevented us from.

Due to the fact that the prayer is the major component of the religion; one who establishes the prayer, has indeed established the religion. And one who abandons it, has destroyed the religion. The

⁴² Here the author is talking specifically about the second pillar of Islam. Islam is based on five pillars; the first pillar is the *Shahadah* (declaration of Faith); second is *Salah* (Prayer); third is *Zakah* (alms giving); fourth is *Saum* (Fasting); and fifth is *Hajj* (Pilgrimage).

Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) has not only commanded us to pray, but has also told us about its benefits. [On the other hand], he has warned us against abandoning the prayer, and how harmful it is [in doing so]. The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said,

"Whoever abandons the prayer without any reason, has indeed committed a big sin."

Also, he said,

"The distinguishing [factor] between faith and disbelief is the prayer."

Also, he said,

"Whoever abandons the prayer will be resurrected in the company of Karun, Fir'aun, and Hamana."⁴³

This means that if he abandons [prayer] due to focus on economic prosperity, he will be resurrected with *Karun*; if it is due to focusing on his kingdom, he will be resurrected with *Fir'aun*; and if it is due to following such a kingdom, he will be resurrected with *Hamana*. What kind of Muslim is he who would like to be resurrected with such disbelievers?

Among the Prophet's statements regarding the importance of prayer is,

⁴³ These three are among those that have been declared in the Qur'an as evil.

"The [establishment of] five daily prayers and between one Friday [prayer] and the next, is an expiation for the person's sins."

And,

"The example of [establishing] the five daily prayers is like having a stream outside of one's house, cleaning oneself five times a day. Will such a person have any dirt left on his body? Similarly, when one establishes the five prayers, he will be left without sin."

Also, he said,

"Whoever believes that the Prayer is an obligatory commandment, and fulfils it, he will enter Paradise."

After having been cautioned by the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) not to abandon prayer, taught us the effect of [not establishing it], encouraged us to pray, and clearly explained its benefits, how then does a Muslim abandons the prayer? Is it because he does not trust the words of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam)?

We always see people serving other human beings day and night; if you ask them [why they are doing so] they will say, "I am repaying the favour", or "I am looking for sustenance." What about Allah? The One who gave you good health, blessed you with all kinds of blessings, gave you the intellect, eyes, ears, hands, legs, and the strength to search for sustenance? Doesn't He deserve from you 45 minutes [of your time]

out of the whole day and night [24 hours]? Doesn't He deserve some gratitude from you for the favours and bounties He bestowed upon you? One who does not offer his gratitude to [Allah] by praying to Him, after all those bounties, that is pure disbelief. And Allah has said,

"When you do an act of disbelief My punishment is most severe."

Those of us who abandon the prayer⁴⁴ must take heed to the [above] warning!

⁴⁴ In another verse in the Qur'an Allah says that the prayer prevents us from *munkar* (evil deeds). Please also note that the prayer is the only deed (or gift) to us given directly by Allah to the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) above the seventh heaven, during *Al-Isra'* and *Miraj*.

Al-Isra' [Allah says, "Glorified be He(Allah) who took His slave (Muhammad (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) for a journey from Al-Masjid-al-Haram (at Makkah) to Al-Majid-al-Aqsa (in Jerusalem), whose surroundings We have blessed, so that We might show him some of Our signs.."] [Qur'an 17:1]

Miraj [The Prophet said, "Gabriel set out with me till we reached the nearest heaven... Then we ascended to the seventh heaven...Then I was shown Sidrat-ul-Muntaha (i.e., the lotus tree of the utmost boundary) ...Then Al-Bait-ul-Ma'mur (i.e., the Sacred House) was shown to me... Then the prayers were enjoined on me: They were fifty prayers a day...[Moses said], Your followers cannot put up with such obligation....I returned and requested Allah (for reduction)... Ultimately Allah reduced it to five [For the full text of the hadith, refer to Sahih Al-Bukhari 1:345; 4:429; 5:227].

A TALK ON FASTING⁴⁵
No. 14, 6th Ramadhan, 1349 A.H.
[25th January, 1931]

The meaning of *Saum* [fasting] is to abstain [refrain from]. In other words it is not just to abstain from eating and drinking, but also from any foolish things, profane language, and evil deeds.

Saum was prescribed in the second year [after *Hijrah*], [i.e.,] after the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) migrated [from Makkah] to Madinah. And the month of *Ramadhan*⁴⁶ is indeed a very holy one. The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said,

"Whoever fasts the month of Ramadhan sincerely for the sake of Allah, his past sins will be forgiven."

However, we will make it very clear that this kind of *Saum*, [i.e.,] one in which one's past sins are forgiven has three conditions:

⁴⁵ Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam.

⁴⁶ The ninth month of the lunar calendar. Like the solar calendar, the lunar calendar has 12 months too; but the months can only have 29 or 30 days, depending on the sighting of the moon (this is a scientific fact). Allah says, *"The month of Ramadhan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and criterion (between right and wrong). So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of) the month, he must fast that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number (of days which one did not fast must be made up) from other days. Allah intends for you ease..."* [Qur'an 2:185].

1. Protect one's tongue from lying, backbiting, verbal abuse, and profanity. If one does any of these actions, the blessing of his fasting is impacted and (according to the Prophet) it is an equivalent of one who has starved⁴⁷ himself from food and drink.
2. Protect one's limbs from any forbidden actions⁴⁸, avoid hitting others, stealing, going to places that are forbidden, and looking at what has been forbidden to look at.
3. Refrain from over-eating, over-drinking, and eating overly luxurious foods. Because the very reason for fasting is to learn self restraint⁴⁹ in order that one may attempt to have the inner self (similar to that of angels). It is as a result of this overeating that at times we see people during the month of *Ramadhan* arguing so much in the streets and in the market places, abusing each other verbally and fighting (because people have so much energy due to overeating).

Ironically, the very month in which we have been advised not to overeat is the month we tend to do just that! This kind of fasting is unhealthy and one in which it does not protect us from evil deeds. Also, this is not the kind of fast that was practised by the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) and the

⁴⁷ In other words this kind of fasting has no significance, i.e., one is only punishing himself.

⁴⁸ This may also include sexual relations with one's legal spouse during the time of fasting.

⁴⁹ Allah says, "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may learn self-restraint [Qur'an 2:183].

Sahabas [companions of the Prophet]. They would normally eat some dates and water, and the same for *[Suhur]*, the light meal before dawn.

As for us, even those who would normally have a piece of bread and tea for breakfast (during regular days), in the month of *Ramadhan* they want to have porridge, roasted meat, special bread, and chicken stew. Then for *suhur* he wants much more, and sometimes between *iftar* [breaking the fast] and *suhur* he may have *bembe*⁵⁰, pudding, and *sharbat*⁵¹ or grape juice.

How does such a fast refrain one from evil deeds? Or how does it become a healthy kind of fasting [i.e., one that] the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) advised? Or how does it become a lesson of self-restraint if the amount of food we cook in the one month of *Ramadhan* may be equivalent to what we would cook for the remaining eleven months?

Some scholars have said that the lowest level of fasting is the one in which you would eat what you normally eat on regular days. If the meal we would have for *iftar* and *suhur* will be like what we would eat on regular days, then our fast may be like that of the Prophets. We will then become healthy, and [be able] to refrain ourselves from evil deeds. At the same time, we could use the money that we save on food to give more *sadaka* [charity] and make our children happier during *Eid*⁵², and avoid being in debt. Also, it would

⁵⁰ A special meal prepared as a gift for a neighbour or relative.

⁵¹ A kind of exotic drink.

⁵² The celebration after fasting. There are only two *Eids* in Islam. *Eid-ul-Fitr* following the fast of the month of *Ramadhan*; and *Eid-ul-Adha* (also called *Eid-ul-Hajj*) to commemorate the day when Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was asked

be easier to those who do the actual cooking [i.e., mostly the women].

May Allah do what is good for us. *Ameen.*

to slaughter his son, Ismail (AS). After Ibrahim having agreed, Allah sent him a lamb to be slaughtered instead. It is during this time that the pilgrims are performing the pillar of *Hajj* in Makkah and the surrounding areas.

JAMIATUL-ISLAM
[A MUSLIM COMMUNITY]
NO. 5 13th Ramadhan, 1349 A.H.
[1st February, 1931]

The word "*Jamia*" in the Arabic language means that which unifies the people, and come together to perform a specific task. For example, *Watan* is a form of *Jamia*, comprising of people who live in the same city, dealing with matters which are beneficial to the city in which they live in, irrespective of their ethnic or religious background. And *Jamiatul-Islam* consists of the unity of all Muslims, being useful to their religion, and avoiding things that may be harmful to it. Also, every Muslim becomes a brother to another Muslim, transcending ethnic differences of, let's say, an Indian and *Mswahili*, or an Arab and *Mkikuyu*⁵³, or between a white person and a black person, or a rich person and his servant.

Allah commanded the establishment of Muslim brotherhood when He said,

"The believers are nothing else than brothers"
[Qur'an 49:10].

And the wisdom of this brotherhood is to achieve unity and avoid having different factions. Also, to stay away from holding on to nationalistic tendencies and attitudes of only looking after their own individual interests, without being concerned of harming another

⁵³ *Mswahili* and *Mkikuyu* are members of two of the ethnic groups in East Africa.

nation. The divisions in the [*Ummah*] is their weakness, even if they claim to have the same agenda, leave alone different ones with individual aspirations.

Let us look into the example of the Muslims who went to start the liberation of Sham [present day Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and Lebanon] during the reign of Sayyidna Abubakar (RA) [1st Caliph]. The Muslims were divided into four groups: headed by Amru bin El-As, Abu Ubaida, Yazid bin Abu Sufyan, and the fourth headed by Sharhabil bin Hasana. And there is no doubt that all of them had good intentions, as we know how they loved each other. But because of having divisions amongst them, they were unable to defeat the Romans. Finally, it was Khalid bin El-Walid who brought together the four groups under his command, and that is when they became victorious.

On the other hand we saw the allied forces during the First World War (1914-1918), they were unable to defeat their opponent when every nation was fighting under their own commander. But the moment the different armies were brought under the command of General Foch⁵⁴ [1851-1929], it did not take long before they won the war. All this shows us that divisions weaken the people, even when you have the same goals.

Jamiatul-Islam expects all Muslims to be like one human body, and just as the different parts of the same body help and strengthen each other, so much so, when one part aches, the entire body suffers from the pain. This is how Muslims should be towards each other. When we have *Jamiatul-Islam* of this nature, it

⁵⁴ Ferdinand Foch, French army marshal. He commanded the Allied armies in France, Apr.-Nov., 1918, launching the Aisne-Marne offensive which ended World War I.

does not stop some individuals from pursuing their dreams as individuals, provided they do not infringe on the rights of others. In fact, it becomes an obligation for the rest to assist those who want to live up to their dreams⁵⁵. What is it that is going to harm a rich person when he assists members of his community to become equally rich? Or would it make sense if someone would be so unwilling to save the fading health of another Muslim due to being afraid that that person would turn out to be as healthy as he is? We should go beyond the days of *Jahiliyya* [ignorance] before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam), and hold on to the teachings of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam), establish a true Muslim brotherhood, love each other, care for one another, and save each other from falling into fault. To reiterate, the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said,

"A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim."

⁵⁵ These would be dreams like wanting to become a doctor, teacher, engineer, mechanic, plumber, etc. Of course with the purpose of benefiting the Ummah, as opposed to being a liability.

LAILA-TUL-QADR⁵⁶
No. 16, 20th Ramadhan, 1349 A.H.
[8th February, 1931]

We all know that the month of *Ramadhan* is a very holy one, and in it are the most special ten days. On these [last] ten days of *Ramadhan* the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) and his companions increased the amount of worshipping⁵⁷. And it is in these last 10 days of *Ramadhan* that there is the most important [special and unique] night, *Laila-tul-Qadr* [the night of power], on which Allah said in the Qur'an that this night is better than a thousand months. And a thousand months is equivalent to 83 years and 4 months⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ The Night of Decree (Power). Allah revealed a surah (chapter) which bears this name. Allah says, "Verily! We have sent it (Qur'an) down in the night of Al-Qadr. And what will make you know what the night of Al-Qadr is? The night of Al-Qadr is better than a thousand months. Therein descend the angels and the Ruh (Jibril) by Allah's permission with all Decrees. Peace! until the appearance of dawn." [Qur'an 97:1-5].

⁵⁷ On these ten days the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) and his companions were in *I'tikaf* - seclusion in the Mosque (day and night) for the purpose of worshipping Allah only. They would only come out if it was absolutely necessary, for example, attend to the needs of a sick wife or child, or to join a funeral procession.

⁵⁸ This is above the average Life Expectancy in the "developed" countries with "the best medical care" (for example, life expectancy in Canada is 78 years old). What could be more special than such a night?

It should not come as a surprise that this night is better than a thousand months. Indeed, this is the night in which the Qur'an was revealed⁵⁹; the best of Allah's scriptures, revealed to the best among His Prophets. The exact night of *Laila-tul-Qadr* is only known to Allah Himself, for His own ultimate wisdom. If this night was known to us, a lot of people would suspend their acts of worship to this very night and they will not be concerned for the other [nine] nights. Although we do not know the exact night, we have, however, been informed [by the Prophet] that it is on the [odd] night of 21, 23, 25, 27, or 29⁶⁰.

To put it into context, the concept of this night being better than a thousand months, means that when one does an act of worship on this particular night, then the blessing he receives for such an act is better than the blessing he will receive when he performs the same act of worship for a thousand months (with no *Laila-tul-Qadr* in them).

This benefit has no comparison whatsoever. It is worth it even if one has to stay awake every night during the month of *Ramadhan*, or even every night through out the year just to make sure they do not

⁵⁹ "Allah caused the Qur'aan to descend from the Protected Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh*) on which it was written to the lowest heaven. In this revelation ALL of the Qur'aan was sent down at one time to a station in the lowest heaven referred to as '*Bayt al-Izzah*' (The House of Honour or Power). The blessed night on which this descent took place is called '*Laylatul-Qadr*' (The Night of Decree)." [Dr. Bilal Philips, *Usool at-Tafseer*]

⁶⁰ The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said, "Search for the Night of Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten days of *Ramadhan*." [Sahih Bukhari 3.234].

miss this night. It would not be too much to do this, considering the amount of blessing one would receive from this one night. People would engage in business dealings for so many years just to be able to make a 10% profit in order to benefit them in a few worldly needs. How then does one not get overly concerned on the kind of business [between the worshipper and his Lord] in which the profit margin is a thousand times [i.e., 1000%] only if one would sacrifice a few nights in the month of *Ramadhan*? Mind you this sacrifice benefits somebody eternally in the hereafter. We should therefore not waste time, and not forget our religious responsibilities on the last ten days of *Ramadhan* as one may have wasted the first twenty days. We should avoid playing cards and other games in the social gatherings, or going to the cinema [movie theatres]. We should make the sacrifice to make late night prayers⁶¹ during this time, recite the Qur'an more, and be in seclusion in the mosque. These are [among the best] days to receive forgiveness [from Allah] for our sins, and to be free from the Hell-fire. If due to our laziness we are not going to stay awake at night, the least we should do is to make sure that we do not miss the congregational prayers [in the mosque], especially the *Isha* [night prayer] and *Fajr* [dawn prayer].

And just as acts of worship have more blessings on such blessed days, the penalty for *maasiya* [prohibited actions] is also very severe compared to doing *maasiya* on other regular days. We have to win over our own desires in order to avoid every evil, such that if we do not gain from the benefit that we expect during the

⁶¹ *Tahajjud*.

month of *Ramadhan*, we would at least have avoided being losers for carrying sins and thrown into the fire of Hell.

O Allah! Give us the best in the *Duniya* [i.e., in this life], and the best in *Akhera* [i.e., life after here].
Ameen.

IQTISAD [ECONOMY]
No. 20 & 21, 26th Shawwal, 1349 A.H.
[16th March, 1931]

The origin of the word, "*Iqtisad*" in the Arabic language is "*Economy*." This is an educational subject in itself, whereby people can learn how to find and preserve wealth. Wealth does help people to prosper if in it there is an element of knowledge and good behaviour.

There are at least three methods in which one can find wealth: Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Business. All these methods are *Fardh Kifaya*⁶² in the *Shariah*, [i.e.,] if none of us involves ourselves in them we all become accountable [before Allah], on top of the misery of poverty that we would have forced ourselves into by being unproductive. We have abandoned this obligation; neither do we have farmers nor manufacturers, or even open a small grocery store like the ones being run by immigrants⁶³. We do not have any means of production! Therefore the little that we earn from the rent we receive by renting out the houses⁶⁴ that we own, and the salary we receive from

⁶² Collective duty, the performance of which is obligatory for the community as a whole: if sufficient number fulfil the duty, the rest are relieved of it; if the duty is not performed, all the community is liable for punishment.

⁶³ The author cannot stress enough the frustration he feels that even the small businesses are run by immigrants, while the natives do not involve themselves in means of production and lifting their standard of living.

⁶⁴ Mostly these would be houses that people may have inherited from their parents or grandparents.

working for others, end up in the pockets of the very immigrant shopkeepers. Every month they make a profit of Shs.15,000⁶⁵ just from simple things like grocery; then there is the profit in the textile industry [i.e., by buying clothes from them]. We are now faced with so many problems, including that of unemployment; we have no other choice but to ensure that the little we have circulates amongst ourselves in order to benefit us, as opposed to benefiting others⁶⁶.

To start with, we need to open up our own stores in order to keep the wealth within. We should first start by opening grocery stores (because these are things that we need on a daily basis for home use). And let us not have a negative attitude towards this by saying, "we cannot do anything!" This statement not only breaks our spirit but it is also unacceptable within the *Shariah*, because it shows that we have given up on the Mercy of Allah.

I will briefly demonstrate how we can start our own grocery stores using the least amount of money. And this is by forming a Co-operative Society (almost similar to the ones they have in Europe [the West]). For example, thirty people from the same neighbourhood come together and each one of them contributes something like shs.20 at the least. Then they open a small store whereby they will all be buying their grocery supply in cash (at the same price that they will normally pay at any another store). At

⁶⁵ There is no doubt that shillings 15,000 from a small community in the 1930s was a lot of money.

⁶⁶ In the West almost a similar situation is taking place, especially in North America. Most of the variety stores are run by Chinese and Koreans, who are much more newer immigrants than the Muslims.

the same time they will also be selling goods to other customers on strictly cash basis too. At the end of the year they will divide the profit into two; one half would be used to increase the amount of goods [in the store], and the other half is to be divided amongst the members [of the co-operative society as dividend]. With such a store even if it will *only* be the members who will buy goods from the store, they will still be able to make an annual net profit of shs.600 to shs.1000⁶⁷. It is only by involving ourselves in such businesses that we will learn how to improve and rectify our shortcomings as we go along. The worst case scenario is that if the business does not succeed we would have lost shs.20 or 30 each in a cause that is worth attempting. Ironically people do spend the same amount for foolish or even harmful reasons⁶⁸.

On the other hand, those amongst us who wear western style clothes [for example, shirts and pants] can come together to form their own Co-operative Society and open up a store [to make their own clothes]. This way they will be able to benefit themselves [directly] instead of spending that money [to buy clothes] from stores owned by people like Souza and Fernandes [immigrant store owners]. Also, among us there are those who have knowledge in areas of business and bookkeeping. It is more ideal to use such knowledge to benefit ourselves.

One way that will guarantee higher profit is to buy goods in wholesale, from the very place that they

⁶⁷ This may sound as a small profit, but it's just the beginning. If business continues successfully it will gradually be expanding, and the members can start other kinds of businesses, or even some kind of a factory, etc.

⁶⁸ For example, cigarette addiction.

come from, and to buy them in cash. For example, if 1 pound of ghee costs shs.1 [retail price], 36 people can come together and buy 36 pounds in wholesale for shs.30. They would have saved shs.6 in total, i.e., 17 cents each. Take a look at an example whereby [Mr. A] buys 100 coconuts for shs.3 from the farmers; then he sells them to [Mr. B] for shs.4. Then he [Mr. B] sells them to a store owner, [Mr. C] for shs.5. Then [Mr. C] sells them to us [the consumers] at a retail price of 7 or 8 cents for each coconut; he [Mr. C] ends up with a profit of shs.2 or 3. But if [Mr. C] had decided to go to the farm himself he would collect the profits made by [Mr. A] and [Mr. B], and he would have ended up with a total profit of shs.4 or 5 instead (for every 100 coconuts).

The three areas in which people make their profit are:

- a. *To buy goods in wholesale.*
- b. *To buy at the source.*
- c. *To buy in cash.*

On the few occasions that we need goods coming from Europe or India, then we should buy them from the very person who orders them directly from abroad. And even in this case if we have enough stores interested in the goods from abroad, we can order them ourselves directly from those countries.

After having demonstrated how to make money, we should now talk about preserving it. Our Islamic religion did not leave any issue but shown us what is good therein and what is to be avoided. One of the things taught to us by the religion is the preservation of wealth. One way is by economising. Allah has

forbidden us from being stingy [on the one hand] and from being extravagant [on the other]. Meaning, we should not hold back *too* much and not give out *too* much, but we should be in between⁶⁹. At the same time He [Allah] has warned us against being wasteful; He has told us that those who are wasteful are Satan's brothers, and they are on the wrong path. And the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) has given us words of wisdom, which every Muslim needs to know and implement. He said,

"To economise [or to use in moderation] is half the life, and to present oneself to people in a positive way is half the intelligence, and the good thing about questioning is that it is half the knowledge."

The following are the three ways of preserving wealth, acceptable to the *Shariah* (and even acceptable to the human intelligence):

- a. *Use in moderation.*
- b. *Avoid being extravagant and wasteful (especially during our wedding ceremonies, and during the mourning⁷⁰ period).*
- c. *Avoid buying anything on credit⁷¹, especially that which somebody knows that they cannot afford.*

⁶⁹ The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said that the Muslim Ummah is a *moderate* Ummah. In other words, we should neither be extreme nor passive. Rather we should be somewhere in between.

⁷⁰ At times even when people have lost their loved one, some members of the community expect to go to the bereaved home, spend so much time there and get fed!

May Allah make it easy for us to do what is best in both our worldly affairs and in the *Deen*⁷². **Ameen.**

⁷¹ A similar example in the later part of the second half of the 20th Century is the introduction of Credit Cards. These have basically resulted in two things, one which the author is talking about, i.e., buying things that one cannot possibly afford. The second one is the involvement in *Riba* (Interest) which is one of the Major Sins. Ibn Majah recorded [2:764] that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah [Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam] said,

"*Riba* is seventy types, the least of which is equal to one having sexual intercourse with his mother."

[*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Vol. 2, Pg. 74 - *Footnotes of Al-Baqarah* 2:275]. One American said, "We buy what we do not need, with money that we do not have, sometimes to please people that we may not even like."

⁷² Loosely translated as "Religion", although it's deeper than that. The closest probably is "A Way of Life", and Allah knows best.

WITCH-CRAFT (SORCERY) AND
FORTUNE-TELLING
No. 22, 3rd Dhul-Qa'dah, 1349 A.H.
[23rd March, 1931]

[One thousand three hundred and sixty] 1360 years after the advent of Islam [in its final form]⁷³ and the spread of its guidance on the planet Earth, still [some] people have not yet abandoned some of the traditions of the polytheists, and they still believe in them. It is as if they do not read the Qur'an, or if they do [read it] then they do not understand it, or if they do [understand it] then they do not believe in it.

A Muslim with a strong belief in his heart may testify that Allah said that those in between the heavens and the earth do not know anything about the unseen except Allah. And the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said,

"One who goes to a magician or witch-doctor⁷⁴, asks him something and believes him on what he says, has indeed disbelieved [in Allah]."

⁷³ The final form is the one that was revealed to the last Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) in the 7th Century. Otherwise, Islam has been present since the first man and Prophet, Adam, although it took different forms under different Prophets, including Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismail (Ishmael), Musa (Moses), and Issa (Jesus) - Peace and Blessing be upon each of them. Ameen!

⁷⁴ Obeah doctor.

Yet the Muslim [who testified that “there is no God but One God”] may still go to these people [witch-doctors], kneels down before them and asks them about heavenly matters, and about what has been predestined for them in the future, both good thereof and evil thereof!

Or a Muslim may read Allah’s statement,

“No calamity will befall upon us except what Allah has ordained.”

Also, be aware of Allah for He says,

“To go to a psychic is evil.”

And also be aware of the Prophet’s statement,

“To go to a psychic is part of idol worshipping.”

Yet after having known all the above, how then does one become unable to get married or go on a journey until he goes and consults a psychic [fortuneteller, soothsayer]?! It is absurd that a Muslim would disregard what the Prophet (Sallallaahu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam) warned us against. And the person goes on to believe that some days are better than others, i.e., one believes that some days are literally bad and nothing goes right, while some days are literally good and everything works out perfectly [like magic]⁷⁵!

⁷⁵ Although it is natural for humans to experience some hardship and ease in our lives on different days, but what the author here is trying to put across is that some people actually believe that *specific* days of the month or week are good and *specific* days are bad. For example some people would not

I swear by Allah that all these [the above] are LIES [mumbo-jumbo]. Nobody knows about the *unseen* except Allah, and there is nothing to protect a person from what He has ordained, and there are no days that are by nature bad or good. One way to establish this is to look at how miserable witch-doctors [or psychics] are. And if they really knew about the unseen then they will be the richest and most respected people [in the community]. Another way to establish this is to look at those couples who before getting married went to a psychic, see if some of them do not have misunderstandings, misery, and sometimes even divorce. And how many couples do we see that did not go to a psychic, yet get along well and live so happily thereafter until one of them dies in peace? And how many people travel on the *last Wednesday*⁷⁶ [of the month], or go to their businesses or places of work and get back home [at the end of the day] with profits and still in good health? And if the *last Wednesday* was as bad as the witch-doctors claim, we would have seen those travelling get into accidents, business people loosing, ships capsizing, aeroplanes crashing, and trains and cars overturning!

These are things that have become so rampant that those who are ignorant amongst us think that they are part of the *Shariah*. But how do we blame the average people so much while they have been influenced by

travel on a Friday, not because they are concerned that they might miss *Jumuah* (Friday prayer), but because they believe a calamity will befall upon them!

⁷⁶ It seems that this is one of the days that some Muslims of Mombasa used to be concerned about a calamity befalling on them.

some of those who are regarded as "scholars" who are themselves believers in psychics?⁷⁷

Among the biggest liars are those witch-doctors who will tell you what is going to happen in the next one year! How is it possible that one who does not know what is going to happen to himself in the next few minutes will know what will happen in the world for the whole year? *Subhana-Llah!* This is an unimaginable lie!⁷⁸

O Allah! Show us the right path and guide us through it. **Ameen.**

⁷⁷ Mind you this is not a problem only among Muslims or just prevalent in the East, rather it is also common in the West. In fact it is in places like North America where psychics make a fortune from those who are ignorant, depressed, having low self-esteem, etc. One may even receive their service just over the phone at a cost of up to about \$5 per minute!

⁷⁸ The Prophet said, "Avoid the seven great destructive sins." *The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! What are they? "He said, "To join others in worship along with Allah; to practice SORCERY; to kill the life which Allah has forbidden except for a just cause; to eat up Riba (usury); to eat up an orphan's wealth; to give your back to the enemy and fleeing from the battlefield at the time of fighting; and to accuse chaste women, who never even think of anything touching chastity and are good believers."* [Sahih Bukhari 4:28]

THE ARABIC LANGUAGE: An Islamic Perspective
No. 26, 1st Dhul-Hijjah, 1349 A.H.
[19th April, 1931]

All Muslims are brothers - one of another, despite their diversities as Indians, Chinese, Europeans, Indonesians, Africans, etc. All these [groups] have their own individual languages, whereby none understands the language of the other. However, for brothers to understand each other, the ability to communicate using one language becomes vital. It is for this reason that Allah has made the language of the Qur'an to be for all Muslims. It should be well understood that the Arabic language is not just for the Arabs, as it is erroneously believed by some people. This concept was well understood by those who embraced Islam during the earliest generations; they made the Arabic language their own. And this is why the earlier Muslims from among the Persians, Romans, Copts⁷⁹, Indians, and Berbers⁸⁰, all spoke and understood each other through the Arabic language.

⁷⁹ The Copts are mostly known as members of the Coptic Church, i.e., the chief Christian Church in Egypt (The Copts broke from the Roman Church when the Council of Chalcedon in 451 rejected their doctrine of Monophysitism*). However, there are many Copts who became Muslims after the 7th century; this is why the author mentions them as an example.

*Monophysite - One who holds there is only one nature (partly divine, partly and subordinately human) in the person of Christ.

⁸⁰ Indigenous people of what used to be called Barbary States, i.e., countries along the Mediterranean coast of North Africa,

Also, Arabic is the language of the Qur'an, and Allah has told us to reflect on the meaning of the Qur'an when we recite it. How then are we going to reflect on this meaning if we do not understand Arabic? At the same time, Arabic is the language of the Prophet [Muhammad] (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam); it is his sayings which are the foundation of the *Shariah* (after the Qur'an), his teachings help us in our worldly affairs and in the hereafter. How then are we going to understand the *Shariah* and the teachings of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) if we do not understand the language that he spoke? How are we going to understand the religion without knowing Arabic?

It is due to the above reasons that Islamic scholars have unanimously agreed that learning Arabic is *wajib* [mandatory] on every Muslim (male and female). And just as the parents have an obligation to teach their children how to pray, they have an obligation too to teach them Arabic.

We should know very well that people will never succeed if they do not understand their language, history, and their ancestors and their place in history. And we are not going to understand all this unless we study. But how are we going to study this history written in Arabic, if we do not understand the language?

the region of present day Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Morocco. The area was ruled earlier by Carthage, Rome and Byzantine, then liberated by the Arabs in the 8th century. After centuries of autonomy, the states were taken over largely by France in the 19th century. Currently they are all sovereign nations.

For all these various reasons it has become incumbent upon us to learn Arabic for those who want to [succeed] in both this life and the life in the hereafter. And we are presently in this weak condition due to our ignorance of the Arabic language, because of our inability to understand this life and the hereafter. Therefore we are unable to imitate those earlier generations and succeed just like them.

How ignorant is it for a Muslim to pray [five times a day] while he does not understand what he is saying? Or reciting the Qur'an like a parrot, not understanding the wisdom and knowledge present in [the Qur'an]?! It is a shame for a *civilized* Muslim to know the history of the British Empire while he does not know the life history [biography] of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam)! Or how does one know about the Battle of Waterloo⁸¹ in which Napoleon was defeated, while he is ignorant of the Battle of *Qadisiya*⁸² in which the Muslims defeated the Persians? Or how does one memorize the works of Shakespeare while being unable to memorize the works of Muslim scholars? It should be very embarrassing to a Muslim to be knowledgeable in the civilization of London and Paris, while being ignorant of our civilization in Baghdad and Cordoba.⁸³

⁸¹ 1815

⁸² 14 A.H. Two years later, i.e., 16 A.H. the Muslims defeated the Persians again in the Battle of Madain. In 2 A.H. the Muslims defeated pagan Arabs in the Battle of Badr; 15 A.H. in the Battle of Yarmuk defeated the Byzantine Empire in Christian Syria; 19 A.H. in the Battle of Heliopolis against the same empire in Christian Egypt, etc.

⁸³ It was a major city in Muslim Spain (Al-Andalus). It was mostly the writings of Sheikh Al-Amin that influenced me to

I am appealing to all parents to fulfil this obligation if they truly love [and care about] their children's success in this life and the next. We are also appealing to all those who have established social clubs in the city to allocate one hour every day in order to learn about the [Islamic] religion and the Arabic language if we truly want to progress. I am pretty sure that if we make such commitments we will be able to read, write, and understand Arabic within a few years. And after that we would not need to write these [weekly] *Sahifa* [pamphlets] in the Kiswahili language.⁸⁴

want to visit Al-Andalus. And in 2000 my wife and I were privileged to visit the cities of Cordoba, Granada, and Seville in Al-Andalus. For those who are interested in reading our experiences, they can check my Blog and read, [Al-Andalus: In Search of Lost Glory](#).

⁸⁴ In other words, we would have little reason to have literature (targeted for Muslim audience) in languages other than Arabic.

OUR CONDUCT TOWARDS
MARRIAGE CEREMONIES
No. 30, 29th Dhul-Hijjah, 1349 A.H.
[17th May, 1931]

We have indicated before that the best thing to do is to follow and stick to those traditions that do not contradict with the *Shariah*. And those that are harmful should be abandoned. One of the ancient tradition that is still rampant is our conduct of being extravagant during marriage ceremonies. In the past there may have been some degree of affordability in being flashy during weddings, also, we had more than enough domestic workers. However, at the present time, we no longer have the economic privileges that we once had, or the physical help that we used to have. In that case it has become incumbent upon us to abandon this particular tradition that once thrived. [In Islam] forcing yourself to undertake something beyond your means or ability is prohibited. At the same time, some traditions go with times, and as such, these [difficult] times can no longer accommodate such a tradition.

Please try to understand that whenever we have these huge weddings those who are at the centre of these strenuous tasks are none other than our mothers and sisters. And within these seven days⁸⁵ [of

⁸⁵ Nowadays in many places we may not necessarily have wedding celebrations that last for 7 days. However, we may still be extravagant either in demanding large sums of *mahar* (dowry), renting very expensive hotels for conducting the wedding reception, purchasing wedding gowns that are

celebrations] we are denying them proper sleep during the day and night. At the same time it is a great injustice to put our women in such situations whereby they have to cook large amounts of foods, 90% of which will end up being wasted! Also, it is not fair for the bridegroom to put his in-laws in a situation whereby they have to perform these unnecessary tasks. The honour is upon us the men, we should be considerate to our women and so we should take the initiative to stop such traditions, which is nothing but [unnecessary] hardship and waste!

The other tradition which definitely needs to be abandoned is that of going around with a piece of white cloth⁸⁶. The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) has forbidden us to publicize an act that transpires between a husband and his wife. And instead of leaving alone such an act, personal as it is, we go a step further to make it become the centre of celebration, with dancing and chanting. So much so, that the father and brothers of the groom become so embarrassed to face their colleagues. This particular tradition has its roots in the Jewish tradition. And

exorbitantly expensive, hire famous musicians or bands, or cooking more than we can consume, etc. And Allah reminds us in the Glorious Qur'an, "*O children of Adam! Attend to your embellishments at every time of prayer, and eat and drink and be not extravagant; surely He does not love the extravagant.*" [Qur'an 7:31]

⁸⁶ This used to be a tradition (and probably still is) in Muslim countries, whereby a piece of white cloth would be placed on the bed of the bride and groom in order that it may have some blood stains during their first sexual encounter. This would be a proof of the bride's virginity! Does it have to be exposed?

mind you we have been commanded not to imitate⁸⁷ them in their traditions. In light of the *Shariah*, and in the name of self-respect, it is incumbent upon us to abandon this tradition. No one should know about it, except [may be] the bride's mother⁸⁸, or her foster mother.

Also, one of the things that we should be concerned about is not to have wedding celebrations that go into one or two o'clock in the morning. The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) has commanded the groom to stay at home on the first seven nights⁸⁹ of being married. The wisdom behind this commandment is [to take advantage of the opportunity] to establish lines of communication, break down the barriers of shyness on the side of the bride, and to start building a partnership between the newly weds. Therefore if the [friends] of the groom do not give their colleague an opportunity to stay at home at night and spend time with his wife, how could such wisdom be achieved during those seven days? And it is also the obligation of the groom's friends to ensure that their colleague adheres to this commandment, and not to discourage him while they

⁸⁷ The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) has said that, "*one who imitates a people is one of them.*" Muslims can *learn* many beneficial "worldly" things from people of other faiths, but it is one thing to *learn* and a totally different thing to *imitate*.

⁸⁸ Probably it may be understandable for a mother to be concerned that her efforts in bringing up a non-promiscuous daughter were fruitful.

⁸⁹ This should not be taken out of context to mean that the groom is also being exempted from praying the *Isha* and *Fajr* prayers at the Mosque.

know very well that this is unfair, especially to his new wife (who has to stay awake and wait for her husband).

It is heart-breaking on the part of young people, whom we expect to be an example of good character and knowledge, to have introduced a more wicked idea. Not only do they want to spend time with their newly wed friend until two o'clock in the morning, but they now want the groom to spend the entire of the seventh night with them in celebrations! How low can we get? The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) has said,

*"He who introduces a bad sunnah, is guilty of the sin of it and of all who perform it after him without diminishing their own sins in the slightest, until the Day of Judgement."*⁹⁰

O young people! Where is the *civilization* that you claim to have if this is what you have reduced yourselves to? Or those of you who are trying to imitate their *civilization* [i.e., the Westerners], is this how they spend their *honeymoon*? Where are the expectations we have over you, if you have not yet proven a bit that you have the ability to be tomorrow's leaders?

⁹⁰ The following is the full text of the hadith. The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said, "*He who inaugurates a good sunnah [custom] in Islam earns the reward of it and of all who perform it after him without diminishing their own rewards in the slightest. And He who introduces a bad sunnah, is guilty of the sin of it and of all who perform it after him without diminishing their own sins in the slightest, until the Day of Judgement* [Sahih Muslim].

Please try to understand that the young people of today are the parents of tomorrow and the elders of the day after tomorrow. You have an obligation of setting a good example, maintaining that good example, and passing it to your children. Otherwise if you continue to dwell in this life style then our community will perish! *Inna Lil-Lahi wa Inna Ilayhi Rajiun!*⁹¹

⁹¹ “*From Allah we came and to Him is our eventual return*” [Qur'an].

TEACHERS: Their Obligation and Reward

No. 33, 20th Muharram, 1350 A.H.
[7th June, 1931]

Among the people who receive the most reward for what they do are those who teach the Qur'an⁹². They open the doors for people to obey and worship Allah; they have opened people's eyes to see what they may not possibly have seen. For this reason, there is none who establishes the prayer except that his teacher gets rewarded without having his [one who prays] reward diminished. Similarly every time one recites the Qur'an, the teacher is rewarded too, because after all he is the one who taught the individual how to recite and understand its meaning. This is very rewarding to teachers; the students should be thankful to their teachers and make *du'a* [supplication] for them.

What teachers are obliged to do is to teach the students all the necessities in their religion. They [teachers] should not be satisfied by just teaching them only the Qur'an, but instead they should teach them all of what is required of them, for example, the pillars of Islam and the pillars of Faith, and what they really mean. They should also [teach them] the biography of Prophet Muhammmad (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam), including major occurrences in his life; [teach them] the life of the other prophets mentioned in the Qur'an; teach them what they must

⁹² The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said that, "*The best among you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it.*"

know about the hereafter; about important aspects of the *Shariah*; about the prayer and its conditions, including observation at their set times. The teacher can allocate an hour or three-quarters of an hour for the purpose of assisting them to memorize these important areas of the religion before he [teacher] teaches them using books and going deep into explaining those areas in detail. And if there is a mosque nearby, the teacher should take the students during times of the congregational prayers⁹³, for example, *Asr* [mid-afternoon] in order to teach them how to properly perform *Wudhu*⁹⁴ and to establish *Salah*⁹⁵ [fulfilling all the required conditions].

All this is an advice to the teachers. And I am not just targeting the teachers of *Madrasa*⁹⁶, but also those [teachers] of regular schools⁹⁷ whereby such

⁹³ This may or may not be necessary with some of modern day institutions, in which there is a mosque within the *madrasa*. However, it is an excellent idea for the students to interact and worship with the larger community as the author is suggesting.

⁹⁴ Ablution or purification performed as a prerequisite for the Prayer.

⁹⁵ The Prayer.

⁹⁶ Islamic schools.

⁹⁷ Mostly we tend to divide education into Religious and “Secular.” However, strong evidence shows that in Islam there is no such thing as religious and secular, or “Church and State.” Rather every duty, including knowledge, may be divided into two forms:

-*Fardh Ayn* (Individual duty, the performance of which is obligatory for every individual, for example, learning how to perform the *Salah* and *Hajj* and their implementation) and,

-*Fardh Kifaya* (Collective duty, the performance of which is obligatory for the community as a whole: if sufficient number

[specific religious teachings] would not be covered on their regular time-table. Nevertheless, they should try their utmost best to throw in such teachings casually during discussions with the students.⁹⁸

When teachers take such necessary steps, they would have accumulated lots of reward, which is something that everybody yearns for. If the school teacher cannot find an opportunity to talk to his students about religion, he should at least encourage them to go to the Mosques which he knows they will be able to find people to teach them about religion. He should make it his concern⁹⁹ to ensure that the students do not miss such sessions at the mosque; and by so doing, he will earn the reward as if he was the one teaching them. This is one way of ensuring that the children retain the knowledge of Islam, and

fulfil the duty, the rest are relieved of it; if the duty is not performed, all the community is liable for punishment. For example, performing the funeral prayer, and in our example of education, learning medicine, farming, navigation, etc.).

⁹⁸ The author is giving an example in areas or countries where the curriculum in public schools is set by non-Muslim administrators and policy makers, but the students and teachers happen to be Muslims. In this case the teacher has to use every available opportunity to share with the students the knowledge of Islam.

⁹⁹ We need to remember that although the author is emphasizing the importance of the teachers playing such a role, we should not lose sight of the fact that the parents have a much bigger obligation to ensure that their children receive at least the basic knowledge of Islam that is required of them.

reviving¹⁰⁰ the religion in these days in which we are abandoning its practices.

Allah! Do for us what is best for us. **Ameen.**

¹⁰⁰ The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said, "*Islam came as something strange, and it will come back as something strange, so give good news to the strangers.*"

**MADRASA [Islamic Schools]: A Way
to Preserve and Protect Our Religion**
No. 35, 5th Safar, 1350 A.H.
[22nd June, 1931]

During the old days when people were more pious [God-conscious], they were prepared to sacrifice their lives and wealth in order to receive Allah's salvation in the hereafter. Some individuals (single-handed) would equip an army in order to participate in *Jihad*¹⁰¹, virtually giving away all his belongings in the way of Allah, build and maintain *Madrasa*, [etc.]. These people used to do all these at a time when Islam was strong and its enemies feared it. It is ironic that today, when we are less passionate about our religion, it has become extremely difficult to find individuals who would make sacrifices. This is *the* time to make such sacrifices and much more, because Islam has weakened, and its enemies have surrounded it trying to cause all sorts of damage and put out the *Nur*¹⁰² [Light] of Allah in order for it not to reach any further.

The enemies of Islam have set traps for us that we may fall victim and stray from the religion. The easiest targets for such traps are our children. And there is no way out of these traps; but the only way to preserve and protect their religion is by building

¹⁰¹ To Struggle - ranging from suppressing one's desires to what the author is pointing out, i.e., participating in a military expedition in defence of an attack from an enemy.

¹⁰² Allah says, "O Mankind! Verily, there has come to you a convincing proof from your Lord, and We sent down to you a manifest Light" [Qur'an 4:174].

Madrasa for them. Then we shall be able to teach them their religion - in the way of Faith, Worship, Etiquette and Manners; at the same time teach them what may be beneficial in this day and age.

The establishment of such *Madrasa* at this present moment is one of the most rewarding things, in fact it is a great *Jihad*. Because we do not have individuals who are prepared to take on such a project on their own, or even not having ten or twenty people who are willing to do it, it has become a collective duty on all of us to contribute whatever we can to ensure that such a project is fulfilled. The reward from Allah may be 700 times.

Those who would like to be rewarded should understand that to establish *Madrasa* is more important than to continue building Mosques, which may be of no use if those who they are intended for are ignorant of their religion, and do not even understand the etiquette of prayer. And to spend our wealth in this manner is a thousand times better than, for example, reading *talqin*¹⁰³ to a dead person, because the reward for the former is a definite one without a doubt. If we would like to be rewarded after death, then we should give *sadaka* [charity] towards such projects¹⁰⁴, as opposed to waiting for people to

¹⁰³ Recitation to a dead person at his graveside after having been buried.

¹⁰⁴ The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) pointed out that *sadaka* geared towards such projects (i.e., building a learning institution), is one of three things that a person continues to be rewarded for even after they die. The other two is one who has passed knowledge to another individual, and an upright child who makes supplications for his/her dead parents.

read *khitma*¹⁰⁵ and *tahlil*¹⁰⁶ for us. Also, one who traditionally organizes *Maulid*¹⁰⁷ because of his love of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam), should know that what would make the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) most happy is the preservation of the religion; and *Madrasa* do preserve and protect the religion. Thus those individuals should make the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) happy by using what they had intended for *Maulid* towards *Madrasa*. As for those who spend exorbitantly in weddings, if they cannot contribute a quarter or half of what they spend for marriage towards *Madrasa*, they should at least contribute the money of what may have gone towards the excessive food. Whoever intends to do a good deed [in terms of spending] should first think of making that contribution towards *Madrasa*. Finally, for those who smoke cigarettes, they should contribute towards *Madrasa* 10% of what they spend on cigarettes daily.

The above are very simple ways that are not difficult [to implement]; [I am] only trying to direct the people towards a deed better than what they may have intended to do. And this is how [we can] preserve and protect the religion. One who protects the religion of Allah, Allah will protect him.

¹⁰⁵ A collective reading by individuals expecting the reward to go towards the dead person.

¹⁰⁶ To say *La-ilaha-illallah*. There is no God but One God.

¹⁰⁷ Celebration of the Prophet's (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) birthday.

Establishment of Madrasa¹⁰⁸: A Good Deed Indeed
No. 36, 12th Safar, 1350 A.H.
[29th June, 1931]

When it comes to performing good deeds, apart from those obligatory duties like prayer and fasting, the rest [non-obligatory] are rewarded in accordance with the timing and place [where the need arises]. There is no single deed which is exclusively more superior at all times and under all circumstances; at the same time there is none which is inferior under all circumstances. Deeds that [appear] minor may reap bigger rewards than deeds that [appear] major if the need for the [minor] deed is greater at the time, and the circumstances are more demanding. This is a very clear issue if only we can ponder and reflect. For example, to give a poor person a glass of water in the city is less noble than to give him a few cents; but if you were to meet the same person in the desert and he was thirsty, with no well or stream of water around,

¹⁰⁸ Islamic schools. In recent years the word Madrasa has been associated with “brain-washing” children in places like Pakistan and Afghanistan. This is not what Madrasas are meant for. A Madrasa is a very low level Islamic institution meant to basically teach Muslim children how to recite the Qur'an, how to perform the ablution and the five daily prayers. They also teach the remaining four pillars of Islam, and the six pillars of Faith. Madrasas do not teach extremism, they do not teach any form of politics or discuss about the conditions of Muslims in any part of the world, and they certainly do not teach about war. They truly teach very basic stuff on the religion of Islam.

offering him that same glass of water becomes more of a noble act than giving him a thousand shillings at that particular time, [under such] circumstances, and [in such a] location! And if such minor deeds can reap such reward as if it were a major one, what about a deed that is in itself major and also in a dire need at the time?

Generally, anybody who is sensible has the ability to determine between what is good, bad, and better; then the *Shariah* puts all these into proper perspective. Unfortunately, some of our own traditions divert us away from observing and fulfilling what is right. For those who have the tradition of organizing the *Maulid* during the month of *Rabi'Awwal*, when that day comes even if he did not have any money, he will go out of his way to borrow money, for example, shs.400 in order to fulfil the celebration. At the same time, the person may have relatives who neither have clothes to wear nor any food to eat, yet, he convinces himself that he did such a noble act [*Maulid*] for Allah and so pleasing to the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam). Shame! He fails to realize that the action of giving his poor relative food to eat for one day is more rewarding than the shs.400 he spent [for *Maulid*] to feed *fulan* and *fulan* [so and so] who may be economically more stable than himself!

We have a great need for *Madrasas* in our cities, in order that we may educate our children in the religion and to equip them with Islamic values; mind you religious knowledge is a deed better¹⁰⁹ than any other

¹⁰⁹ No matter what the deed is, whether it is belief in the Oneness of Allah (*Tauheed*) or establishment of prayer, they

deed. What if in these times there is more need to seek this [knowledge], and the only way to achieve it is by establishing *Madrasa*? Then the establishment of *Madrasa* is not only more important than building a Mosque, but even more than any other non-obligatory duties, for example, prayer and fasting. This is in a sense the present day struggle. [After all] struggling is not just to fight against the polytheists militarily [in self defence]. Rather it is every action that is intended to make Islam triumphant [when it is under attack], whether we use our hands, pens, wealth, or sacrifice our lives.

Let us try to establish Islam by [establishing *Madrasa*] because after all there are no other ways. By so doing we would be a step ahead of our enemies, and we would have protected and preserved our religion, which is threatened for being surrounded by enemies that are overt and those that are subtle. By fulfilling this requirement, we would no longer need to send our children to *missionary* schools which take away Muslims from the realm of their religion; at the same we would not need to send our children to public schools either, whose harm far outweigh their benefits.

can only be fulfilled properly by first acquiring the necessary knowledge.

ZEAL
No. 39, Rabi' Awwal, 1350 A.H.
[July, 1931]

It is a natural phenomenon among each and every one of us to admire something good that one of us may have, whether that goodness is of something from within the religion or from among worldly matters. And the more one admires what belongs to someone else, eventually the feeling of wanting to have the same starts to develop within us. This is what is known as zeal. Zeal is what generally pushes us forward, and what makes us refuse to accept defeat in things that we know we have the potential to excel in, so as to bring pride and fame to ourselves in our worldly affairs. On the other hand if one is aware of a noble act that may lift his position [in society] and is able to fulfil such an act, but just chooses not to take any action on it [due to complacency], then such a person has no zeal and his heart is virtually dead! And such behaviour provides room for being confronted with hardship in the future.

Let us take the example of the Japanese; after having seen the Europeans [Westerners] prosper in knowledge and arts, their zeal did not allow them to take a back seat, knowing very well that they had the same human quality just like the Europeans. And they had every reason to believe that they can do what the Europeans did. And they embarked vigorously on a mission to learn the knowledge of the European people and their arts. So much so that [Japan] today is a nation to be reckoned with by others, including the Europeans; Tokyo today competes with cities like

London, Paris, and New York in knowledge and prosperity.

Similarly amongst us [in Mombasa], we see the prosperity of the Indians [Hindus] in running their successful stores and other businesses, schools, libraries filled with books of all disciplines, their own daily newspapers, and hospitals (which ironically are the ones helping us with free medication). Their success has been so enormous that if one were to visit Mombasa, the impression they will get is that the Indians are the indigenous people and we who are the real indigenous appear as immigrants. We have become among the lowest of the low!¹¹⁰

What is it that prevents us from opening our own stores, instead of allowing our money to go into the hands of others? Why don't we have our own schools? Or what is it that stops us from having our own library which could make our journey in searching for knowledge a little bit easier? What prevents us from starting our own newspaper¹¹¹ that could be an instrument for guiding our people and benefiting them?

There is nothing that prevents us from accomplishing these things except due to the fact that

¹¹⁰ Although the author is giving an example of the city of Mombasa, this can be found in almost all Muslim countries. Although there is so much wealth that lies under Muslim lands, today it is the foreigners that benefit the most from such wealth than citizens of those countries or even fellow Muslims from poor Muslim countries. For example, you wonder why Americans should benefit more from the oil in the Gulf than the Muslims in Bangladesh or Timbuktu.

¹¹¹ I believe that the author always believed in the “power of knowledge”, i.e., knowledge of every shade and strip.

we do not have any zeal and we do not care being the lowest of the low. This is how dead our souls are! A *dead person does not feel any pain from a wound!* We are not saying that we should have stores as big as the ones owned by the Hindus, but we should at least do in accordance with what we can afford. If they are a hundred times richer than us, and if they can do something worth a hundred thousand, we should be able to do something that is worth a thousand. And if it can be done by one Hindu, then we should be able to have a hundred people team up and do it.

If we really want to prosper and be in the same league with those [who are prosperous], this is the way to get us to that level. But if we only want to achieve things by having wishes instead of actions, while we continue with our demoralising saying, "nothing gets done in Mvita"¹¹², then we should know that forever we are going to remain the lowest of the low and we are not going to make even an arms length of progress. And future consequences would be on a much bigger proportion. May Allah have mercy on us.

Ameen.

¹¹² Mvita is the indigenous name of the city of Mombasa, Kenya. Although here the author is giving an example of Mvita, this happens in many Muslim cities where the residents have almost given up on anything to do with progress and achievement.

Love of One's Watan¹¹³ (Patriotism)
No. 42, 25th Rabi' Awwal, 1350 A.H.
[10th August, 1931]

When you love somebody you always think about that particular person, and how best you can make him [or her] happy. And you only tend to think about the things that will elevate that person. Also, when you hear about somebody else who has done a good deed to the person whom you love, you also tend to love that person [who performed that good deed] and thank him for the good deed. At the same time when you hear about a person who hates the person you love, then you also tend to hate that individual and not even want to see him. On the other hand, when one loves somebody, generally we also tend to like the *Watan*¹¹⁴ he comes from. We need to be in love with our city, and this means to love the residents of our city. And to love the residents of our city is to like for them whatever elevates them and everything which is good for them in both this world and the hereafter. Also, to do whatever is beneficial to them, and to keep away from them whatever may be a reason for them to be looked down upon by other people. We have an obligation on all this due to our love for our *Watan*,

¹¹³ Native land, home, birthplace, etc.

¹¹⁴ The translator has first hand experience on this aspect. Ever since my wife and I visited Palestine and received the best hospitality ever from the Palestinian people, we have fallen in love with the natives of East Jerusalem and the other towns and villages in the rest of Palestine (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip). We have adapted this Holy Land as our 3rd home.

and because the pride of our fellow residents is *our* pride, and their shortcoming is *our* shortcoming.

The love of our *Watan* varies from one individual to the next; also, every people express their love to their respective *Watan* in their own different ways. For example, scholars express their love of the *Watan* through their determination in educating its residents, and encouraging them to equip themselves with knowledge, and admonishing them in following whatever is good and avoiding whatever is evil. As for the elders of the *Watan*, their love is expressed by informing the residents about things that are beneficial to them and cautioning them on things that are harmful, and to try and take away from their lives whatever is an impediment to their progress. As for those who are rich, their love for the *Watan* can be expressed by using some of their wealth in areas that the elders see fit. And the young people's love for their locality is to educate themselves, and learn every possible skill and trade that is beneficial to their *Watan*, so that they do not rely on the outsiders. And the rest of the residents their love of the *Watan* should be in the form of abiding and following the teachings of the scholars and advice from the elders.

This is the true love of one's *Watan*. [The question is], do we love our *Watan*? I don't think so, but if we are saying that we love our *Watan* then our claim does not seem to be supported by what the reality is, or our love is just a claim without any justification.

But if we are truly passionate about our *Watan*, and if all of us participated in contributing towards it as we have mentioned above, before long we would have seen the residents of Mombasa elevated to a higher human position among humans. The foundation of

achieving this is to be united and to love each other, and to have the success of one's locality ahead of one's own success. And at the head of all this is to follow the commandments of Allah and His Prophet.

May Allah guide us towards following what He has commanded and avoiding what He has forbade.
Ameen.

Ways of Refraining from the Evil
No. 44, 8th Rabi' Thani, 1350 A.H.
[22nd August, 1931]

Scholars have argued that, "the good of this world and the hereafter is to be conscious of Allah and to obey Him; and the evil of this world and the hereafter is to rebel against Allah and to disobey His commandments." Without any doubt whatsoever, this is an authentic statement. Anybody with a good intellect and stable mind is able to prove these words. [At times] it is due to being disobedient to Allah that thieves do not get arrested, alcoholics do not get punished, the adulterous do not get caught, an extravagant individual does not get poor, or a person with a title does not come down embarrassingly.¹¹⁵

Our desires may take us deep down into disobedience and evil due to the *sweetness* which may appear in such kinds of deeds. Many people do not refrain themselves from doing evil due to lack of being conscious of Allah. And so, in His eternal wisdom, Allah ordained shame¹¹⁶ and dishonour for sinners so that those among them who remain undeterred by the

¹¹⁵ Here the author seems to show that when one disobeys Allah and goes unpunished, it does not mean that individual is lucky or that Allah is pleased with him. Indeed, Allah operates in His own ultimate wisdom. At times we may not even understand why He does the things He does, but we know and believe, without a doubt, that He knows best.

¹¹⁶ Ironically, at times we avoid doing some things that are not permissible not because of the fear of Allah or the hell fire, but rather because of the fear of being found out by our fellow human beings.

fear of hell to commit sinful acts, may be restrained by the fear of a more immediate, worldly punishment of falling into disgrace. And that is why Muslims did less evil during those times when Allah would destine some form of a calamity in our midst, and the fear of doing evil only disappeared when Muslim leaders stopped enforcing Allah's punishments.

Is it inconceivable to get a replacement for shame and dishonour, so that it could be a barrier (even in a small way) for people not to do evil in public in case they don't abandon it totally? Yes, we can get a replacement.

In the old days when the Jews wanted to make the Palestine a place of their monarchy, they refrained from laying charges against each other before the Turkish courts; they insisted amongst themselves to bring charges before their own scholar, *Ha-kham*. When they realized that they could not imprison a person who has broken the law, or punish them in any way due to them being under an empire [i.e., Turkish Empire] which was not of their own, the punishment of the guilty one would be for everybody in the Jewish community to shun that individual, and not to talk or mix with him in any way. When this ruling came into effect, all the Jews would stay away from that person as if he was suffering from a terrible contagious skin disorder. And such a punishment would within days bring the guilty individual to some deep realization due to the psychological tremor that he was undergoing.

In some of the towns in East Africa some things that were evil manifested, and some elders went to

their ambassador¹¹⁷ to complain about the evil going on in their town. They appealed to him to try and find ways of stopping this evil, but the ambassador responded by telling them that that came about with the action of the people themselves, i.e., how could the people see a person doing evil deeds in broad daylight and still earn the highest respect from the people, and standing up for him when he passed by? [With this attitude] the individual would not think that he did anything wrong because his respect is intact. But if you disrespect him due to what he has done and he realizes that his position has been altered, he would never repeat the evil that he committed or he would have concealed it so that people are not aware of [as opposed to brag about it].¹¹⁸

And due to the above mentioned two reasons, we should not feel ashamed to cut off relations with people who do evil openly after having been warned. This is what the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) said, i.e.,

"To love for Allah, and to hate for Allah is a sign of Iman [Faith]."

Every one of us has an obligation whenever you see somebody doing what is evil to help him refrain from it. The best thing is to meet with that individual in

¹¹⁷ These are not ambassadors representing their countries abroad, but rather who are responsible for the well being of people under their jurisdiction, i.e., in a town; these would be the equivalent of a city Mayor.

¹¹⁸ When one has committed evil and conceals it, he may stand a better chance of being forgiven by Allah, than one who publicizes his evil behaviour. And Allah knows best.

private, share with him a good word by talking with him nicely to abandon whatever bad behaviour he may have. If this action does not work, then it will be an obligation on the community to abandon that individual in every aspect of his life. We should neither participate in marriage celebrations that relate to him nor in after-death activities, and we should not have any respect towards him. We should maintain these actions until he comes to terms with what Allah demands of him, and it becomes clear that he has abandoned the evil behaviour.

This is the only way to help people stay away from evil during these times when shame and respect for Allah is becoming extinct. But when we abandon to help each other enjoin what is good [Al-*Ma'ruf*] and forbid what is evil [Al-*Munkar*]¹¹⁹, and when we respect one who does not pray (and even give him a high status in our gatherings), and when people who abuse alcohol become our friends, and when we talk and smile with evil-doers, then we would have proven to be disrespectful of Allah and in fact create an atmosphere of having more *Al-Munkar* prevail in our society. And these brothers of ours would tomorrow blame us in *Akhera* [hereafter] for not refraining them from evil deeds while we had an obligation to help them stay away from the hell-fire. And helping one stay far away from the hell-fire is by helping them stay away from evil deeds (which are reasons why people would end up in the hell-fire).

¹¹⁹ Allah says in the Qur'an, "You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-*Ma'ruf* and forbid Al-*Munkar*, and you believe in Allah...." [Qur'an 3:110]

Wealth, Knowledge, and Good Conduct
No. 45, 16th Rabi' Thani, 1350 A.H.
[30th August, 1931]

These three things, i.e., wealth, knowledge, and good conduct [behaviour]¹²⁰ encompass everything in this world. Whoever is blessed with any of these [three things] has indeed been blessed so very much by Allah; and one who is given two of these has been given the envy [of this world]; and one who gets a combination of all three has been given both the envy and success of this world. And it is only a few amongst us who achieve all of these; in fact it rarely happens. These three things compliment each other. For instance, wealth without knowledge is not the best of things [in fact it may be damaging to an individual]; and knowledge without being decorated with good behaviour is not very beneficial¹²¹. And the best out of

¹²⁰ In fact, once the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) was asked what *Taqwa* was, and he said that it is "good behaviour." Other meanings are piety, righteousness, consciousness of Allah, fear of Allah, etc.

¹²¹ It is important here to put these statements in an Islamic context. Generally Muslims with a little bit of intellect and faith would most likely refuse to learn from a scholar whose knowledge is not reflected on the nature of his behaviour. But in secular institutions this is not necessarily the case, for example, university students are less likely to shun off an excellent professor just because he is an adulterer or alcoholic who still maintains his sanity.

good behaviour is generosity, humility and militancy¹²².

If a wealthy person is neither generous nor humble, people tend to hate him. And wealth which is supposed to be one of the things that provides happiness in this world, become a reason for his misery¹²³. Similarly when a scholar is not humble and happens to be arrogant, it leads people into isolating him and giving him a deaf ear. And if he is a coward and does not speak the truth out of fear, then his knowledge becomes useless. And instead of receiving blessings [from Allah], he is bound to be punished in the hereafter.

[One] benefit of having wealth is to be able to enjoy it to a degree acceptable by the *Shariah*, and to spend it amongst the people in your surrounding in order to receive [among other things] satisfaction in one's inner-self¹²⁴ and reward in the hereafter. But when you find an individual over powered by his own wealth, such that neither him nor the *Ummah* really benefit from the wealth, then him and a poor individual are the same; in fact a poor person is much

¹²² There is absolutely no contradiction here. A Muslim needs to be humble and generous, but also at the same time be ready to stop evil with his hands, and defend himself and his faith militarily if a need arises. Humbleness should not be mistaken with cowardness.

¹²³ Generally wealthy individuals want recognition, fame, and respect; if they cannot achieve these it bothers them tremendously.

¹²⁴ We have to admit that although Muslims should give charity for the sake of Allah (*feesabili'Allah*), but in the process when you see changes in the lives of those you have helped alleviate their financial burdens, it certainly gives you a sense of happiness. It is part of human nature.

better¹²⁵. Why would any person go to great length to accumulate wealth in this world that is not beneficial to him, and on top of that create for himself a basis for his own destruction¹²⁶ in the hereafter - when his wealth would be set on fire to burn his face and ribs?

What is the benefit of the wealth when the rich individual sleeps in a shanty while his home is occupied by tenants¹²⁷? What is the benefit of wealth when the wealthy cannot help his own loved ones to lessen their hunger or their lack of clothes? If the benefit of having wealth is just to peep¹²⁸ at the money [and not spend it], then even poor people see wealth all the time! And if one just wants to be known that he *has* wealth, then even those who have been entrusted with other people's money can also claim to *have* wealth! But the benefit of wealth is to use it in a good manner, i.e., in ways in which one may reap some blessings and reward [from Allah], and also in ways in which one may have a better life. When this benefit is

¹²⁵ Because Allah has spared him the trial and his failure thereof (as a result of the wealth).

¹²⁶ Allah says, “*And spend in the Cause of Allah and do not throw yourselves into destruction (by not spending your wealth in the Cause of Allah), and do good. Truly, Allah loves the good-doers.*” [Qur'an 2:195].

¹²⁷ The author appears to be making some kind of a similitude.

¹²⁸ Allah says, “*The mutual rivalry for piling up of wordly things diverts you, until you visit the graves (i.e., until you die). Nay! You shall come to know! Again, Nay! You shall come to know! Nay! If you knew with a sure knowledge. Verily, you shall see the blazing Fire!*” [Qur'an 102:1-6]. Also, Allah says, “*Woe to every slanderer and backbiter. Who has gathered wealth and counted it, he thinks that his wealth will make him last forever! Nay! Verily, he will be thrown into the crushing Fire.*” [Qur'an 104:1-4].

missed then there is no difference between money and stones.

Wealth is such a powerful thing in uplifting the condition of a people, incomparable to anything else. No where will you find a prosperous people [in this world] but that wealth played a part in their ultimate prosperity. And Allah has promised a [great] reward to those who give out of their wealth in His cause¹²⁹. What then stops rich people from spending their wealth on good deeds? Is it because they are unaware of the reward or that they do not believe Allah's admonition?

To give out wealth in the way of Allah is one of the great signs of *Iman* [faith]; [alternatively], refraining oneself from giving is a sign of lack of faith. Praying [5 times daily] or fasting [in the month of *Ramadhan*] are just not enough signs of one's Islam; how many out there may be praying simply because it has become just a routine, or fast because it has become second nature¹³⁰? Among the signs of *Iman* is to perform acts

¹²⁹ Allah says, “*But those among them who are well grounded in knowledge, and the believers, believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and those who offer prayers perfectly and give zakat and believe in Allah and in the last Day, it is they to whom We shall give a great reward.*” [Qur'an 4:162]

¹³⁰ Prayer should not be seen as an act which is just ritualistic, but rather transformative. It should also be regarded as a shield to refrain a believer from evil deeds. Allah says, “*Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book, and offer prayers perfectly. Verily, prayer prevents from Al-Fahsha and Al-Munkar (i.e., all kinds of evil, illegal and sinful deeds).....*” [Qur'an 29:45]. Similarly, fasting should not be like second nature, but rather it should bring a believer closer to being conscious of Allah.

of worship not because of being used to doing them, but to do them for Allah and because of strong conviction.

BUILDING MOSQUES
and
DECORATING THEM
No. 49, 15th Jumada' Awwal, 1350 A.H.
[28th September, 1931]

There are many people [Muslims] who believe that there is no deed as good as building a mosque, and there is no act more noble than to decorate the mosques with ornaments, and beautify them with nicely curved doors and windows, and expensive rugs and carpets. And it is due to this belief [i.e., that the best deed is to build and beautify mosques] that it is impossible to show someone another deed (apart from this) and be able to appreciate it. Unfortunately all this is due to our ignorance in understanding how mosques were during the lifetime of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam), and that of the rightly guided Caliphs. It is due to our ignorance of understanding the unimportance of acts that we so dearly think as noble.

No one denies the fact that to build a mosque is an act which is so noble, but on condition that there is a need for it in such a location, and if there is no other act which is of a greater priority at the time according to *Shariah*. But if the mosque is not needed, and if there is another act which is more important, this changes the act from being that of *obedience* to an act of *maasiya* [committing sin].

It is a well known fact that to decorate a mosque with expensive adornments, painting it with all sorts of colours, and putting all kinds of tiles and marbles is

a Christian tradition clearly seen in their churches. And in my opinion I have always maintained the position that when people focus so much on spending so much wealth in beautifying mosques, it is an indication of the weakness of their faith or ignorance of their religion - contrary to what other people think [i.e., "beautifying mosques is a sign of piety"].

The period in which Muslims were most pious was the period of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) and the rightly guided Caliphs. [Let us ask ourselves] how was the mosque [of the Prophet] in Madinah [i.e., *Masjid-un-Nabawi*] in those days? It was such a simple construction, the roof of which was that of the leaves of a date-palm tree, and the floor was sand and gravel; and there were no rugs of any kind. When it rained the roof would leak, and the worshippers would prostrate on mud and water. And do not think that the Muslims of that time were poor, in fact they were rich. If they really wanted to build a mosque and adorn it with silver and gold, they could easily have afforded.

Some companions among the *Ansar*¹³¹ who had seen some beautiful churches in Sham went to the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) with lots of money so that he can use it to make the mosque look better. The Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) refused, and he said, "this shanty is sufficient, just like the shanty of [Prophet] Musa (AS)."

¹³¹ The *Ansar* are the "helpers", i.e., the residents of Madinah who helped the *Muhajireen*, i.e., the "immigrants" who moved from Makkah to Madinah during the *Hijrah* (a turning point in the history of Islam - establishment of the first Islamic State, and the beginning of the Islamic Calendar).

Now the question is, how did the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) and the rightly guided Caliphs utilize the wealth? Basically, they used [the wealth] to propagate the religion, and to improve the status of Muslims. None of them was concerned in constructing *too* many mosques, but rather in teaching the religion. And it is in these areas¹³² where the wealth should mostly be utilized for those who want blessing from Allah.

Too many *unnecessary* mosques in not a healthy thing according to *Shariah*; this is the reason why Sayyidna Umar [the second Caliph] stopped Muslims from building two mosques in the same area. If we look at it closely we will see that whoever insists on building a second mosque has the intention of dividing the Muslims and to take away the wisdom of having one congregational prayer in a locality. If people were to build another mosque in an area where one already exists, and the first one can still accommodate all the residents comfortably, then it becomes *haram* [a prohibited act] and should be demolished. Such a mosque becomes *Masjid-ul-Dhirar*, i.e., a mosque that is harmful.

¹³² The companions were sent to various corners of the Globe to do *Dawah*, i.e., propagate the religion of Islam. The other area where the wealth was used was in having the *Baitul-Mal*, i.e., the central treasury which was responsible in distributing *Zakah*, food, and improving the well being of Muslims. And in later years to build higher institutions of learning, for example, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt; Timbuktu in Mali was a Major Centre for Learning; and Al-Qarawiyyin University in Fes, Morocco (arguably the oldest in the world, founded in 859 it is older than Al-Azhar, Oxford, or Sorbonne).

Therefore, should it be said that the best way to utilize the wealth [of Muslims] is to build mosques and beautify them? *Hasha!* [Absolutely not]. But the best way of utilizing the wealth is to improve the status of Muslims and propagate the religion. Is there any other way to make Muslims understand [their priorities] than to equip them with knowledge? No, this is the only way [i.e., to educate them].

“LOTTERY”: An Islamic Perspective
No. 25, Jumada’ Awwal, 1350 A.H.
[September, 1931]

Every Muslim believes that gambling is *haram* [a prohibited, or forbidden act in the eyes of the *Shariah*].¹³³ Its prohibition is clearly stated in the Qur'an¹³³. Unfortunately *Westernization* has attempted to camouflage, or paint a good picture on some of these prohibited deeds in order to ordinarily and artificially appear to be different and nicer. However, they are in fact naturally and spiritually harmful.

Among those that have been made to appear different is gambling. Instead of using the term gambling, it's been given names like lottery, raffle, etc. Thus it has convinced or confused some people that this may not after all be what is prohibited within the parameters of the *Shariah* [Islamic Law].

Gambling is so crystal-clear that it does not need any explanation. It is every action that will cause one to take what rightfully belongs to somebody else through a try and error technique, whether one uses cards or other methods¹³⁴ in the process. Therefore

¹³³ Allah says, “*O you who believe! Intoxicants, gambling, Al-Ansab, and Al-Azlam (arrows for seeking luck or decision), are an abomination of Satan’s handiwork. So avoid that (abomination) in order that you may be successful.*” [Qur'an 5:90].

¹³⁴ Nowadays lottery is more computerized and the wins run into millions of dollars in places like Canada and the United States. At the end of all of it millions of people get ripped off, and one or a couple of individuals benefit. Then there are the

we may give this act any name, and one may use cashew nuts or marbles, but at the end of the day it means the same¹³⁵, thus they are *haram*. We should therefore not be deceived by the different names this action is given, or the different formation it is presented to us.

We are currently faced with the lottery introduced to us by the *Goa*¹³⁶ people. Most people have been hooked to the lottery - young and old, males and females. Some people have been unable to detect or distinguish that this is a form of gambling. Therefore, we have an obligation of educating them and letting them know that this is still gambling and so it is *haram*. Hopefully, they will be able to understand and stay away from this act and adhere to the commandment of Allah.

Apart from the fact that lottery is *haram*, it is also harmful to us in a non-*Shariah* context or point of view. And that is in the area of helping the *Goa* community build themselves economically, at a time

famous VLTs (Video Lottery Terminals), and the more fancy and elegant places like the famous casinos in Las Vegas, USA, and other places in many countries.

¹³⁵ In this case *the means does not justify the end*. No matter what means one uses, the end result is *haram*.

¹³⁶ Goa - former Portuguese colony on the West coast of India. Since December, 1961 it has been part of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu in the Republic of India. Majority of them are "Westernized Christians." Until Kenya got independence from Britain in December, 1963, they were a prosperous business community in the city of Mombasa. Again, this may just be an example. Today the Muslims may not necessarily be benefiting the Goa community but other non-Muslims, whenever we participate in buying lottery tickets.

when we ourselves are going through very difficult economic times. They are using this same funds to educate their children, who in turn are going to be our bosses tomorrow in various offices, the same way that today their parents are our superiors. The *Goa* community has made in this month alone, shillings 2,000, out of which shillings 500¹³⁷ alone is from amongst us. How destructive are we? We are helping a people have a better life while our own condition is getting worse! How stupid or ignorant is it to equip people with ammunition in order that they may destroy us, while we defencelessly stand by?

O Allah! Have Mercy on us.

¹³⁷ In the 1930s, British Shillings 500.00 was definitely a lot of money.

DRAWING LESSONS FROM
THOMAS LIPTON¹³⁸
The Difference Between
Us and Them
No. 57, 12th Rajab, 1350
[22nd November, 1931]

Wealth has always played a fundamental role in the improvement of people's well being. It has strengthened people, it has made it possible to have institutions of learning, promoted art, and opened up businesses - people with such accomplishments are generally regarded as being successful. As such they are normally praised, revered, and even feared; all as a result of the wealth that they possess. That is why you will never find a nation which is prosperous except that you will find out that among the reasons of its prosperity is the generosity of its wealthy citizens in using their wealth in the best interest of their nation.¹³⁹ At the same time you will observe that

¹³⁸ Sir Thomas Johnstone Lipton (1850-1931) was a British food merchant.

¹³⁹ For example, the Rockefeller Foundation in the United States - A foundation started in 1913 by an oil tycoon, John Davison Rockefeller (1839-1937); he devoted a large part of his later life to philanthropy. The foundation with assets totalling about US\$1 billion supports research in three main areas: medical and natural sciences, agricultural sciences, and the humanities and social sciences. Within our generation, I think Bill Gates and his wife are among the most generous Philanthropists who help beyond their boarders in far away Africa and South Asia.

among the most backward nations, among the reasons for their backwardness is the stinginess of its wealthy individuals and the lack of utilizing their wealth in the enhancement of their nation.¹⁴⁰ It is due to such reasons [of being generous] that Muslims became prosperous during the days of people like Uthman bin Affan, Zubeir bin Awwam, Abdul-Rahman bin Awf, and Talha-tu-Fayyadh [companions of the Prophet Muhammad]. Those were the days when Muslims had stronger faith and never doubted the advice of Allah urging people to spend in His way [*feesabili'Allah*].

This is why today there is a great disparity between us [Muslims] and the Westerners or Asians. While they have emerged triumphant, we are in a humiliating position; while they are stronger, we are weak; while they have succeeded, we still trail behind. The situation is such that we depend on them even in matters of educating our children or taking care of our sick people, or even when our wives go into labour during child birth¹⁴¹ - *Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilaihi Rajiun.*¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ African nations are certainly victims of such from its wealthy citizens!

¹⁴¹ It is not uncommon to find a huge population of Muslims in universities in the United States and Canada. As we had mentioned earlier gone are the days when prestigious institutions could be found in Muslim lands, for example, in Cairo, Fes, and Timbuktu. Also, Muslims rely on Western type of medicine even for problems as simple as a cold. And nowadays midwifery is less common as our women have to be assisted, during child birth, by male gynaecologists due to insufficient women specialists, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

¹⁴² “From Allah we come, and to Him is our return.” A verse or phrase usually used when a Muslim learns of another Muslim’s death. Probably the author is referring to our

Last October, Thomas Lipton, the one whom Lipton tea is named after, passed away. During his lifetime he used thousands so that his native country of England could pride itself. Before he passed away he bequest shillings 20 million to be channelled towards schools, hospitals, maternity homes, and other acts of charity. In the West there are other people richer or who have less wealth than Mr. Lipton, but they all contribute to the well being of their nations - similar to what Thomas Lipton did. Why then should we be surprised with the success of the Westerners when the wealthy among them are so generous? You might argue that they are much richer to begin with. Well, that might be true, but let us say that Mr. Lipton used 10% of his wealth towards his people, who [amongst us] will bequest 10% of his wealth during the course of his life. And the shs. 20 million which he left behind [for charitable purposes] was 1/3 of his total wealth. Who amongst our wealthy people has used 10% of his wealth towards his people, or who will bequest even 10% of his wealth when he dies towards the fulfilment of his people's needs?

Unfortunately the rich amongst us are so mean, and they even become more stingy when they are on their death beds, ending up dying so rich. You will see such people putting conditions on the wealth which is supposed to go towards the rightful inheritors - conditions which even go against the teachings of Allah and His Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam). The conditions are of course not to the benefit of the inheritors but their continuation of their stinginess

community as being a dead *Ummah* -Figuratively and may be literally!

even when they are about to [face their Maker] on the Day of Judgement! Neither do they make it easier for the rightful inheritors nor do they allow the wealth to benefit anybody else outside of their families.

It is due to our absolute lack of generosity that we are not moving ahead and our situation is deteriorating, while others prosper and their situation gets better - [at least in this world].

People who are stingy are enemies, not just enemies to themselves but also to their nations [i.e., their people]. Also, neither do they enjoy the pleasures of this life, nor do they receive the blessings which could be beneficial to them in the hereafter. [In a sense] they are partly responsible for this terrible situation the *Ummah* finds itself in!

The Obligation of Muslims Today
No. 65, 9th Ramadhan, 1350 A.H.
[17th January, 1932]

It is very clear that the Muslims of today are in a low, humiliating, and embarrassing state - the [main] reason being abandonment of the teachings of our religion, i.e., to do good and avoid evil. The Muslims are currently in a situation whereby even their own enemies feel pity for them; never will you compare one city with Muslims and another one with non-Muslims except that you will find great disparity between them.

For example, Mombasa has about 75,000 people, majority being Muslims - but [unfortunately] their condition is the worst in terms of education, economic success, leadership, and everything else. The Hindus [in Mombasa] have among the lowest amount of people, yet they have two daily newspapers. On the other hand it is embarrassing that the Muslims do not have their own daily paper in Mombasa or anywhere else in Kenya for that matter. We only have this very tiny publication [Al-Islah] of ours which is quite marginal. It pains me when I see the Goa people with their own school while we do not have a single school in any of the cities where Muslims are the majority¹⁴³. The only institutions we have are those that teach children the recitation of the Qur'an in which children get enrolled when they are 7 years old and finish when they are about to reach puberty. And there are some who graduate and yet they are unable to recite the

¹⁴³ These would be cities along the East African coast (Indian Ocean), for example, Mombasa, Malindi, and Lamu.

Qur'an correctly, and they do not understand its meaning. This includes the meaning of *Surah Fatiha* which is supposed to be recited in each of the [five] daily prayers. The most unfortunate part is that upon their completion from such institutions, their parents [literally] pushes them into a pit of fire, i.e., in schools run by missionaries - this in fact is the most pathetic situation.

We have an obligation to build our own institutions for learning in which our children could learn every aspect of the *Shariah*¹⁴⁴, and also knowledge that is going to benefit them in this world [i.e., for reasons of livelihood]¹⁴⁵. Such institutions are the only way of protecting our children from the harmful agenda of the missionary schools. Also, their religion will be protected¹⁴⁶, it will raise them up from the position of humiliation; they will be taught respect and good behaviour which will raise their self esteem and have the strength to put an end to any oppression. Hopefully, they will start being ambitious and wanting to succeed and be the best; Muslims should be the best as Allah tells us so¹⁴⁷. But this position of being the best cannot be achieved until we open up the way to lead us there; and the only way is through knowledge, both religious and secular.

¹⁴⁴ *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), *Tafseer* (Translation), *Seerah* (Biography of the Prophet), *Hadeeth* (The Prophet's Tradition), etc.

¹⁴⁵ Medicine, engineering, plumbing, auto mechanics, agriculture, economics, etc.

¹⁴⁶ Basically protection of the Islamic way of life.

¹⁴⁷ Allah says, "You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind..." [Qur'an 3:110]

The above [i.e., knowledge] is the only way to carry the Muslims to the level of being masters of all affairs; indeed, it is the only way to being the best. But [the question is] where is the money to put up such institutions? I know that there is no shortage of money [in our *Ummah*], but first and foremost we need to be united, then to have the intentions in our hearts to do such a project, and then to have the determination to do it; only then shall we be able to raise the funds. And the following is the way to do it.

As we had mentioned earlier, there are 75,000 people in Mombasa, majority being Muslims. Let us say 50% of the people are Muslims, and we [in the Old Town]¹⁴⁸ are about 12,000. If each one of us would contribute shs. 3 per year, we shall be able to have shs. 36,000 annually - this amount is sufficient to run such a learning institution, and we will be able to educate our own children in both secular and religious education, i.e., to benefit them in this world and in the hereafter.

However, those amongst us who are pessimistic and negative will say that such a project will not happen; well, I am telling you that such a thing can happen and we can all do it [insha'Allah] if our hearts desire¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁸ The oldest inhabited part of the Mombasa Island.

¹⁴⁹ This challenge of having our own educational institutions put before us by Sheikh Al-Amin 70 years ago should be taken very seriously by every generation. In fact we will need more of such institutions in this 21st Century as public schools move further away from family values and the concept of "the Lord is our Shepherd." Muslim leaders should take this challenge, and we the followers must be prepared to dig deeper into our pockets for the sake of a better future for our children and our

We constantly complain that our standard of education is deteriorating, but it is absolutely absurd to expect the government to raise our level of education while we do not want to put [a single cent] towards its improvement! Do you think that the high standard of education can only be achieved by sending long “applications” and too many complaints [to the government]?

We always want the government to do for us what is does for the Hindus. But, have we ever thought to be like them in so far as contributing towards educating their children is concerned?

The Hindus normally contribute shs. 20 each annually on top of the poll tax; and they do not find [the amount] to be a lot considering that it is for educating their children in secular education only. Why can't we be willing to pay only shs. 3 per year, as we want to have our children educated in both secular and religious education?

I put this proposal before you, my people, to think about it. And I pray to Allah to help us in fulfilling our goal. **Ameen.**

children's children; a future in which Allah is at the centre of it.

**Is It True That Religion Is
A Barrier To Our Progress?
No. 14, 30th May, 1932
[24th Muharram, 1351 A.H.]**

[Unfortunately] the majority among the westernized young people are deceived by the western life style, and in fact think that religion is a barrier to being progressive and to becoming masters of all disciplines. Their way of [thinking] is as a result of their observation that most Westerners have abandoned their religion, thus they [our young people] think that this is the reason why they [Westerners] have prospered. Therefore, [their thinking] is that the Muslims too will not prosper until they abandon their religion and focus only on worldly issues.

This is absolutely *not* true. Although there may be some truth about this in other religions, but definitely not in Islam. Whoever wants to establish the fact that the [Islamic] religion does not stop people from progressing and succeeding should take a closer look at the status of Muslims during the first century [in the advent of the Prophet Muhammad]. It will be made clear that this kind of thinking, i.e., that Islam is a barrier to progress or that to be so learned in religion is also a barrier, has absolutely no justification.

Both Muslims and others know that the Muslims of the earliest generations used to understand their religion so well and they were very pious individuals; however, they were still able to rule new territories and came up with different disciplines of knowledge.

Within half a century they were able to be the rulers of half the Globe. They entered Europe and ruled the whole of Spain¹⁵⁰, a few cities in Italy, small portions in Switzerland and France, almost about to enter Paris. They built big learning institutions in which Europeans benefited from, just as today our young people go to study in western institutions in London, Paris and Berlin. Europeans learnt from the Muslims of yesteryears all sorts of knowledge which became the reason for being what they are today. The Muslims of those days had tremendous knowledge in the Arts; also, they [Muslims] invented Algebra¹⁵¹, and

¹⁵⁰ The following are excerpts from the Los Angeles Times of 12th April, 1999 from an article by the Religion Correspondent, Margarit Ramirez. “.....*Islamic ties to Hispanic culture date back to 711, when the Muslim general Tariq ibn Zayid [Ziyad] conquered Spain, and the Christian Visigothic domination of Roderick came to an end. Under Moorish rule, Christians, Jews and Muslims coexisted in Spain. Conversion was encouraged but never forced. Because the Arabs did not bring women with them, they took Spanish wives, and within a few generations the Muslim population was more Spanish than Arab. For the next 700 years, Al-Andalus, as the Muslims refer to Spain, enjoyed an era of political and cultural splendor, becoming one of the most intellectually advanced countries in medieval Europe. Islamic influence penetrated almost every facet of Spanish life, especially music, architecture and literature. But, gradually, Christian armies advanced. After the fall of the last Moorish stronghold in Granada in 1492, the cross replaced the crescent on Spain's minarets and Muslims were forced to convert to Christianity or be exiled. Many Latino Muslims in Los Angeles see their conversion [to Islam] as a return to their Moorish roots....*”

¹⁵¹ In fact terms like Algebra (*al-Jabr*) and Zero (*Sifr*) are originally Arabic. However, this does not mean that

expanded disciplines like Chemistry¹⁵², Astronomy, Medicine¹⁵³, Logic, and Philosophy¹⁵⁴. And they [the Muslims] were the first to put gun-powder to military use and to invent the art of paper-making; and it is they who introduced numerical characters to Europe. As for their heroism in political monarchy and the wisdom of [conduct] in a war zone, they took it to new heights in those days.

This is what those Muslims achieved even though they were religious. How then can one say that Islam prevents people from moving forward or causes them to fail? *Hasha!* [absolutely not]. The fact of the matter is that there is no doubt that it was Islam that caused our ancestors to succeed and reach a level that

Europeans learnt all this knowledge from the Arabs necessarily; rather they learnt from Muslims - the Arabic language being synonymous with Muslims and the Islamic faith.

¹⁵² “Jabir Ibn Haiyan, known by the name of the alchemist Geber of the Middle Ages, is generally known as the Father of Chemistry. He died in 803. He wrote twenty-two treaties dealing with chemistry and alchemy, including *Kitab al-Kimya*, and *Kitab al-Sab'een* which were translated into Latin in the Middle Ages. The translation of *Kitab al-Kimya* was published by the Englishman Robert of Chester in 1144 C.E. under the title The Book of the Composition of Alchemy.” [By: Dr. A. Zahoor]

¹⁵³ Avicenna, Latin name of abu-Ali al-Husayn ibn-Sina (980-1037), a great scientist. His Canon of Medicine remained a standard text in Europe until the Renaissance.

¹⁵⁴ Averroes, Latin name of abu-al-Walid Muhammad ibn-Ahmad ibn-Rashid (1126-1198) - a philosopher, a commentator on Aristotle and Plato who exerted a great influence on the development of the later Latin scholastic philosophy.

no other nation reached at that time. [Islam] encourages people to learn and work, and teaches people not to remain ignorant and lazy, and commands people to reach their best and be powerful. Also, it teaches how to stop oppression, and not to be followers; and it encourages to engage in Economics [business] and traverse the [universe], build sea vessels (for example, submarines), and to be prepared with all sorts of weapons during a war.

There is nobody who is knowledgeable in Islam and its history who is going to disagree that Islam commands people to work and stop being lazy, or deny that Muslims were the masters in the globe in those days when they held on to the teachings of their religion firmly. However, I believe that there are two kinds of people who may deny this open fact. The first being a non-Muslim who thinks that Islam is like any other belief system whereby you can only become religious if you give up worldly desires [i.e., become a monk]. This would be a person who does not realize that Islam encompasses the good of this world and the good of the hereafter. Islam is not a religion which turns its back to the world. And the second person is one who thinks that he is amongst the *Sufis* [Mystics], thinking that religion is to abandon this world - denying himself to earn a living and discouraging others from pursuing ways of finding sustenance, arguing that would be contrary to the belief that Allah is the Provider¹⁵⁵. Also, they are totally against

¹⁵⁵ I guess the argument here is that if Allah is The Provider why go and work instead of staying in the mosque if your food is still guaranteed? What some people fail to know is that work is part of worship, it is all embodied in that concept that Islam is a way of life. And after all the best example and most

knowledge of, [let's say], human behaviour, sports, and arts - insisting that such knowledge is *kufr* [heresy] and that a Muslim should stay away from it. We have heard from people in this country [Kenya] who say that it is *haram* [forbidden] to study Geography, although Muslims have contributed in the advancement of Navigation¹⁵⁶ that Europeans have benefited from. Those who claim to be *Sufis* make it harder for Muslims to advance due to their reluctance [in accepting some worldly things as being permissible]. And because they appear to be God-fearing individuals, many ignorant people have been moved by what they say, thus blindly follow what they preach. No matter how Islamically knowledgeable or pious one may appear, they cannot reach even 10% of the level of an unknown *Sahaba* [companion of the Prophet], let alone the famous ones. *Sahaba* like Zubeir and Talha were businessmen who were very prosperous. Zubeir's wealth was around 50 million Dirhams. At the same time have those who call themselves *Sufis* understand how Omar bin El-Khattab disciplined those people who were lazy, making sure that they worked?

pious human being, the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) worked for sustenance. Whom should we emulate if not him?

¹⁵⁶ It appears that the author is linking Navigation with Geography. Basically to be able to traverse the land and understand its geography one has to have the knowledge of where he is going in the first place, i.e., Navigational knowledge.

During the time of the Prophet (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam), both the *Ansari* and the *Muhajireen*¹⁵⁷ mostly involved themselves in business and agriculture. You could not find anyone among them who was able bodied but decided not to work and instead just stayed in the mosque awaiting some charity from the one who had more money, or one who was strong enough [to work]. But our *Sufis* are prepared to take the lowest position in our *Ummah*, and are prepared to be looked down upon in their own cities due to their self-induced poverty and ignorance.

The fundamental reason as to why the Muslims are currently in this pathetic situation is the fact that we have abandoned the teachings of our religion. [Teachings] that had elevated the position of our ancestors, and gave them honour and strength. [Unfortunately] we have abandoned the good deeds that the Qur'an has stressed, for example, generosity, and fighting oppression. When our ancestors held on to the [Qur'an] they were able to reach the peak. Therefore, the reason for us being in the "back seat" is not because of religion as it is erroneously claimed by ignorant individuals. One just needs to compare our [current] state with that of our ancestors to prove that it is totally untrue [and baseless] to claim that [the religion has caused the Muslims not to progress].

We should clearly understand that we are not going to move ahead until we follow that which our ancestors followed - Islam, i.e., obey what Allah has commanded and staying away from what He has prohibited. Also, we should be hard working people

¹⁵⁷ *Ansari* are the helpers and inhabitants of Madinah, and the *Muhajireen* are the inhabitants of Makkah who fled to Madinah and found refuge from the persecution.

and do whatever will restore the respect of the Muslims, and not to abandon all the worldly affairs and decide just to stay in the mosques. This would be to belittle the intelligence and health that Allah has blessed us with. Islam does not teach us not to go to work, or cause us not to move forward or even be on the same level like others. Islam is the key to making people successful and not to make them fail.

May Allah make things easy for us. **Ameen.**

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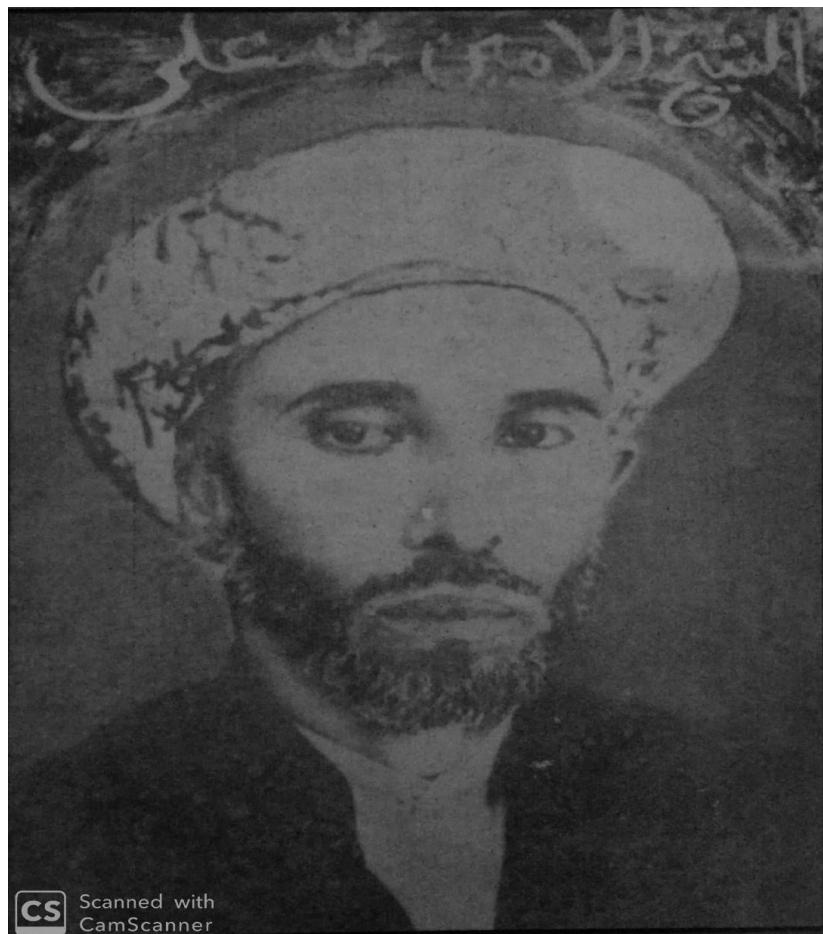
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